UNITED STATES MILITARY ADVISORY ASSISTANCE GROUPS DURING THE COLD WAR, 1945-1965

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

Military assistance advisory groups (MAAGs) played an important part in United States strategy during the first two decades of the Cold War. From 1947 to 1963, the US provided billions of dollars in military weapons, equipment, and supplies to its allies, in an attempt to strengthen them against real and perceived communist threats. The advisors managed the delivery of this materiel and trained combat and support troops in dozens of nations. In some cases, the advisors provided direct guidance to allies at war The armed forces committed thousands of officers to the advisory effort.

The advisory groups, for a variety of reasons, achieved only mixed success. The advisors received very limited advisory training, served short tours of duty, and could rarely speak the native language of the host military. There were strict financial and time limitations of military assistance. Lastly, the advisors themselves emphasized training that reflected resource-intense American warfare, inappropriate for many of its allies. Though assistance and advising strengthened several allies and helped others defeat communist enemies, no recipient of aid was able to provide for its own defense without US support, and the advisory mission to South Vietnam ended in disaster.

This work uses previously unpublished primary documents from several archives to show how the advisors worked with and trained foreign militaries around the world. It also examines the training and lives of the advisors themselves, as they lived in cultures much different than their own and reflected on their experiences.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family: Joe, my grandfather, who served his country in Korea, Vietnam, and elsewhere, and loved me like a son; Josie, my grandmother, also a veteran, who accompanied my grandfather around the world, raised five children, and loved me like a son as well; Kevin, my uncle, an army officer who imparted to me a love of military history; and Karen, my mother, an army sergeant who marched into Kuwait when I was fortunately too young to appreciate the danger, and did everything in her power to ensure I had a happy and prosperous childhood. Together they raised me.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

MILITARY ADVISORS IN THREE VIGNETTES

Brigadier General Frank Cam and his Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) had a number of objectives in Portugal. A 1951 agreement granted the Iberian country American military aid, including hardware and training, so that the nation could better meet its defense obligations to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Cam, whose advisors administered the aid and conducted training, intended to convert the Portuguese Air Force (PAF) from propeller-driven aircraft to jets. However, the general found serious problems with the PAF, reporting in 1952 that it was "a most negligent organization with reference to ground safety." Pilots damaged wingtips while taxiing and injured themselves when they recklessly jumped out of their cockpits before the plane came to a complete stop on the tarmac. Maintenance crews smoked in the hangars, and started fires when they dropped cigarette butts onto gasoline-stained floors. They had no specialized training to put those fires out. Before any flight training or operational planning could begin, MAAG Portugal would have to teach the PAF to not damage itself by accident.[1]

[1] "Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement, with Annexes, between the United States of America and Portugal," 5 Jan 1951, *Military Assistance Bilaterals*, http://cdm16040.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p4013coll11/id/1099/rec/20 (hereafter *Military Assistance Bilaterals)* and 114.Brigadier General Frank Cam, "Monthly Activities Report #18, July 1952," 7 Aug 1952, Folder (hereafter F) 319.1 Monthly Activity Reports, Jul-Dec 1952, MAAG

In 1954, air force Lieutenant Colonel James Muri served in the advisory group for Belgium. Assistance to Belgium, which included aid to Luxembourg, had begun in 1950 as a part of the American commitment to European security. The assistance package included military supplies and advisors to train the Belgian and Luxembourger troops. The advisors lived in Brussels where they interacted with the Belgian population, sometimes in unpredictable ways. In September, Muri invited a salesman into his home to discuss buying a rug. Over the course of the sales pitch, Muri and his wife began to suspect the man was selling stolen rugs and decided against a purchase. The salesman became irate and Muri asked him to leave. After storming out, he reappeared at their doorstep a moment later, with a knife plainly visible in his jacket. When Muri confronted him, the man went for his knife and Muri grabbed a nearby chair to use as a weapon. Muri fought off his attacker and ran down to the street in time to get his license plates as he sped away. He reported the incident to the Belgian police, who later caught and arrested the man, a career criminal wanted for similar incidents.[2]

Near the beginning of US assistance and training for the Republic of Vietnam, Lieutenant General Michael O'Daniel met with Vietnamese Brigadier General Nguyen Van Vy to discuss different aspects of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam. O'Daniel urged that the Vietnamese reduce their troops from a proposed 200,000 but Vy worried that the Viet Minh, with Chinese support, could invade and defeat a smaller force.

Portugal, Box 9, Entry (hereafter E) 244, Record Group (hereafter G) 334, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD (hereafter NARA).

[2] "Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement between the United States of America and Belgium,"22 Mar 1950, *Military Assistance Bilaterals*, and Lieutenant Colonel James P. Muri, "Statement," 8 Sep 1954, F Auto Accidents, Investigations, Etc., MAAG Belgium-Luxembourg, Box 46, E 86, RG 334, NARA.

O'Daniel suggested that "numbers alone" were not the answer and that the ARVN needed more training and experience with large formations before they could support a bigger army. The topic of discussion then shifted to political matters in South Vietnam. Vy was furious that a mutinous army unit avoided punishment because of political connections to President Ngo Diem. Twice in the conversation, O'Daniel urged Vy to not "blow a fuze [sic]." Vy responded, in English, "I have no intention of blowing any fuzes."[3]

MILITARY ASSISTANCE ADVISORY GROUPS IN THE COLD WAR

These vignettes display the variety of experiences had by American military advisors during the Cold War. The advisors played a key role in the United States' military assistance policy, which provided large amounts of military equipment and supplies to American allies. US policy makers, across three presidential administrations, used military assistance to support Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia. The objective of assistance was to bolster allied defenses against the perceived Soviet threat, make them more secure against internal strife, and strengthen alliances. American policy makers believed improving allied security would also improve US security while preventing the need to deploy American ground forces. A major objective of military aid was to make its recipients "self sufficient" and able to maintain their defenses

[3] "Minutes of Conference at MAAG," 29 Nov 54, MAAG Vietnam, United States Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA (hereafter USAHEC).

without continuing support. The advisory groups' experiences show that self sufficiency was in most cases difficult to achieve.

Assistance began in Europe, when President Harry S. Truman provided aid to the Greeks, who were involved in a war with communist guerrillas. It later spread to the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, then expanding their forces to meet the possibility of a Soviet invasion of Western Europe. Truman also extended support to the Middle East and Asia, arming the Turkish, Iranians, South Koreans and Nationalist Chinese, as well as the the French in Indochina. President Dwight D. Eisenhower reduced military aid to Europe, but expanded support of Middle Eastern and Asian nations. Military assistance began drawing to a close during John F. Kennedy's administration, but continued in smaller amounts to many nations and increased dramatically to South Vietnam.

Military assistance advisory groups (MAAGs) implemented military assistance. They administered the aid, oversaw its delivery, and reviewed its use in allied military hands. In some of the missions, advisors also trained foreign troops, reformed their military education centers, and even helped reorganize the host nation's armed forces. In rare instances, the advisors also helped guide military operations. The advisors tried to behave as "soldier diplomats," who not only trained allied forces but also represented the United States as ideal citizens. They dealt with greatly varying allied armed forces. Some were quite modern and possessed mechanized armies and air forces. Others, like Ethiopia and Libya, had small militaries, with few if any modern weapons, or very large armies with antiquated equipment, as in Turkey. The advisors trained Europeans, who

enjoyed high levels of education, and Asian and Middle Eastern forces, whose enlisted men were sometimes illiterate. The MAAGs operated in Middle Eastern deserts, Asian jungles, and European countryside. They worked out of urban office space, isolated blockhouses, and in the camps of armies at war, training allied soldiers on equipment as varied as submarines, recoilless rifles, and typewriters.

This dissertation is the first general examination of the MAAGs during the early years of the Cold War, approximately 1945 to 1965. It uses case studies of numerous MAAG missions around the world to demonstrate what the advisors did in the field, how they interacted with foreign militaries and governments, and how their actions contributed to United States strategy and foreign policy. It explores the individual and collective experiences of MAAG personnel, providing new insight into a unique community of "global" Americans who perceived, interacted with, and were influenced by foreign cultures. It also examines the selection, training, and education of American advisors, and how those advisors reflected on their experiences and suggested changes to the system.

Previous studies of US military assistance fall into two categories: general works that discuss military assistance as an element of American foreign policy, and case studies of individual advisory groups. In the first group is Chester J. Pach's *Arming the Free World*, a survey of US military aid in the early years of the Cold War from the perspective of Washington. Pach argued that fear of communist expansion influenced US aid, which primarily intended to hold up the morale of allied countries under the threat of communist uprisings and/or invasions. This made the "giving of military aid

more important than the specific purposes to which the aid was put." Furthermore, military assistance was useful for "preparing for a possible war, securing customers for American armaments industries, checking the spread of Soviet influence, and cultivating foreign goodwill."[4] Lawrence S. Kaplan's *A Community of Interests* examined the critical role of military assistance in the development of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.[5] In the case of Vietnam, Kathryn Statler's *Replacing France*, Mark Atwood Lawrence's *Assuming the Burden*, and Seth Jacobs' *Cold War Mandarin* all include examination of the various ways that the United States used military assistance to support the French and Republic of Vietnam.[6] William H. Mott's two-part study of US military assistance abroad assessed what made particular missions successful and others not.[7] References to other important studies regarding aid to Iran, Turkey, Ethiopia, Thailand, and elsewhere are addressed in relevant chapters later in this work. Books such as Donald Stoker's *Military Advising and Assistance* and Louis A. Picard's and Terry F. Buss's *A Fragile Balance* provide overviews of military assistance and

[4] Chester J. Pach, *Arming the Free World* (Chapel Hill: the University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 5 and 230.

[5] Lawrence S. Kaplan, *A Community of Interests: NATO and the Military Assistance Program, 1948-1951* (Washginton, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1980).

[6] Seth Jacobs, *Cold War Mandarin: Ngo Dinh Diem and the Origins of America's War in Vietnam, 1950-1963* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2006); Mark Atwood Lawrence, *Assuming the Burden: Europe and the American Commitment to War in Vietnam* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2005); Kathryn Statler, *Replacing France: The Origins of American Intervention in Vietnam* (Lexington: Kentucky University Press, 2007).

[7] William H. Mott IV, *United States Military Assistance: An Operational Perspective* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999) and *United States Military Assistance: An Empirical Perspective* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002).

individual studies of missions throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.[8] Robert Ramsey's *Advising Indigenous Forces* examines general aspects of advising during American involvement in Korea, Vietnam, and El Salvador.[9]

There are relatively few major works on specific MAAG operations. Ronald Spector's *Advise and Support* covered American military assistance to both the French and the South Vietnamese governments, concluding it failed because of the Republic of Vietnam's dysfunction. In *Rearming the Phoenix*, Andrew Birtle studied the American effort to rebuild the West German army in the mid-1950s. The mission was mired in political difficulty, but the Americans succeeded in supplying the *Bundeswehr* with enough weaponry and equipment to make it a viable force. Bryan Gibby's *The Will to Win* is an account of the Korean Military Advisory Group's (KMAG) efforts to train and develop the Republic of Korea Army during the 1950-1953 war. Gibby made used KMAG's records to argue the success of the Republic of Korea's armed forces on the battlefield was crucial to the survival of the Republic of Korea, and the Americans in KMAG were central in training those armed forces.

[8] Picard, Louis A. and Terry F Buss. *A Fragile Balance: Re-examining the History of Foreign Aid, Security, and Diplomacy* (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 2009) and Donald Stoker, ed., *Military Advising and Assistance: From Mercenaries to Privatization, 1815-2007* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

[9] Robert D. Ramsey III, *Advising Indigenous Forces: American Advisors in Korea, Vietnam, and El Salvador* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2006).

Therefore, the relationship between KMAG and the Korean forces was of enormous importance in the history of the Korean War.[10]

This dissertation argues that the military assistance advisory groups played an important role during the Cold War. For almost two decades, they managed the delivery of billions of dollars of equipment to foreign allies. They trained combat and support troops in dozens of nations and provided strategic, operational, and even tactical guidance to several allies at war, in Greece, Korea and Vietnam. The army, marine corps, navy, and air force committed thousands of officers to the advisory effort, during a time when all the services experienced enormous change and technical challenges. The study also shows the human side of the advisory mission: how the advisors were trained, what they thought of their place in the Cold War, and their personal experiences as guests in foreign lands and trainers of foreign soldiers.

Overall, the dissertation demonstrates that the advisory groups, for a variety of reasons, had limited success in training and equipping allies of the United States. This was in part due to the limitations of military assistance. Regardless of how hard advisors worked, they could only achieve so much with the limited resources of military assistance and the defense budgets of client nations. But some of the failures were due to the advisors themselves, who emphasized training that reflected American military traditions inappropriate to the client nation. The MAAGs trained allied forces to use

[10] Ronald H. Spector, *Advice and Support: The Early Years: The U.S. Army in Vietnam* (Washington, DC: Center for Military History Publishing, 1983)*;* Andrew J. Birtle, *Rearming the Phoenix: US Military Assistance to the Federal Republic of Germany, 1950-1960* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1991); Bryan R. Gibby, *The Will to Win: American Military Advisors in Korea, 1946-1953* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2012).

heavy weapons, mechanized transportation, and jet aircraft. Such a techno-centric style of warfare was very difficult for economically poorer and undereducated forces, especially in the Third World, to adopt. Some American advisors, like General James A. Van Fleet, argued that the US should have provided training and assistance suited to their allies' inherent strengths, but such advisors were an exception to the rule.

Including this introduction, the dissertation is organized into six chapters. Chapter Two examines the origins of the military assistance program, which began with aid to Greece in 1947. It shows that military assistance started as an ad hoc measure and remained a confused system, relying on yearly budget allocations and the coordination of several departments of the US government. It argues that the goals of assistance—self sufficient allied militaries, capable of managing their own forces without significant US support—greatly exceeded the limited means of assistance. The chapter also examines how the services assigned and trained officers and enlisted men for advisory work, and what some of those officers thought of the advisory effort. Until 1958, there was not a formal school for training advisors. Nevertheless, the advisors saw themselves as important parts of the Cold War effort and as effective trainers.

Chapter 3 examines the MAAGs in Europe, from 1947 to 1960, showing that the advisors worked with allied forces to improve their tactical and logistical abilities and better contribute to the defense of Europe. The chapter uses case studies of Greece, Denmark, the Netherlands, Spain, and some additional material on France and Germany, to illustrate MAAG activities, successes, and failures. Ultimately, the advisory effort in Europe was a partial success. Limitations to the assistance budget, and the failure of

European countries to commit more resources to their defense, prevented the North Atlantic Treaty Organization from contributing as many divisions and air wings to European defense as originally planned. However, the quality of the European forces improved, in part due to the training done by the MAAGs.

Chapter 4 studies advisory missions in the non-European "Third World," with examination of aid to Turkey, Iran, Libya, Ethiopia, the Republic of China (Taiwan), Japan, the Republic of Korea, and Thailand. Whereas military assistance in Europe primarily intended to deter Soviet aggression, assistance in the Third World also included security against internal revolt. The United States committed less military assistance to the Third World than to Europe, but advisory groups still worked in large, important missions. In most of the Third World countries, the advisors tried to create "little American armies" of heavily armed, mechanized troops, but this decision made those forces unable to support themselves without major US assistance. Many advisors worried that Third World armed forces were too involved in their nations' domestic politics.

Chapter 5 discusses the advisory mission to Vietnam, beginning with the First Indochina War (1946-1954), when MAAG Indochina primarily oversaw logistical support for the French. It then shifts to the advisory mission for the Republic of Vietnam (RVN). It shows that from 1950 nearly through to the introduction of US combat forces in 1965, the American advisors were highly optimistic of first France, and then the Republic of Vietnam's, ability to defeat communist forces. The advisors emphasized conventional warfare and only belatedly attempted training the Vietnamese

to defeat the communist insurgency in the south. However, the chapter also shows that not all the American advisors were committed to the conventional model, and that some argued for drastic change to the ARVN even before the rise of the communist insurgents. Chapter 6 provides a conclusion.

This work makes use of several terms. It generally refers to the advisory groups as "MAAGs," though the exact titles varied from nation to nation. "Military assistance" refers to the myriad of programs which provided military hardware, low-interest loans, or grants to allied countries to improve their defensive abilities and internal security. It uses the inexact term "Third World" to collectively refer to countries outside of Europe, the United States, and the Soviet Union.

This dissertation relies heavily on primary sources from several archives. The National Archives in College Park, MD Record Group 334, Records of Interservice Agencies, include monthly activity reports, compiled by the army, navy, and air force members of each MAAG, and MAAG yearly summaries, often written by unit historians. The Muir S. Fairchild Research Center and the Air Force Historical Research Agency, at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, AL, include the papers of Major General August Kissner, who served as MAAG Spain's commander from 1953 to 1958. The archives there also include papers written by Air Force students with insight on military advising. The US Army Heritage and Education Center and Military History Institute at Carlisle, PA, possesses a wealth of primary documents about the armed forces generally and the army specifically. This work uses many of the archive's student papers and several collections of personal papers. Lastly, the dissertation uses the

General James A. Van Fleet Papers from the George C. Marshall Research Library, at the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, VA. Van Fleet led the advisory mission to Greece, commanded United Nations forces in Korea (and thus oversaw KMAG), and, after retirement, conducted a review of advisory missions in East Asia on behest of President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Since the September 11th attacks in 2001, the United States has embarked on a variety of training and advisory missions around the world. Modern training and assistance missions remain thorny affairs, full of difficulties that require subtle action by advisors and policy makers alike. A study of how the United States has carried out such missions in the past—looking closely at failures and successes—can provide both warnings and guidance for how modern advising missions should behave.

This work offers a new examination of American military effort in the Cold War. It demonstrates that though the MAAGs worked within the restrictions of military assistance, which provided limited funds to achieve large objectives, they still shaped foreign militaries, sometimes modelling themselves off the American example in organization, tactics, management techniques, and professional and cultural demeanor. They prompted creative thinking within the military education apparatus. They offer a valuable source for how US military personnel viewed and interacted with other nations and cultures, showing how advisors were strongly anti-communist, genuinely believed in the superiority of their own military procedures and standards, and considered themselves an important part of US security.

CHAPTER II

MILITARY ASSISTANCE, ADVISORY GROUPS, AND TRAINING

The United States began a decades long program of support for allied armed forces when it extended military aid to Turkey and Greece in 1947. The formal apparatus of military assistance was a confused, changing system that relied upon yearly budget allocations and coordination between the Office of the President, the Departments of Defense and State and the leaders of the uniformed services, as well as the actions and decisions of foreign governments. How the advisory groups were organized and trained reflected the disorganized nature of the entire program. The services assigned officers and enlisted men to the advisory groups without much firm criteria. The MAAGs did not always have clear guidance from Washington's policymakers and strategists. Until 1958, there was not even a formal school for training advisors. The armed services never created a specific training course or military occupation specialty for the advisor, outside of some special courses intended for Vietnam, even though all the services were involved with the MAAGs for over twenty years.

This introductory chapter examines the general background of military assistance during the first two decades of the Cold War. It also provides a description of the

MAAGs, showing how a typical advisory group was organized and how it conducted its activities. The bulk of the chapter examines the training and selection of American advisors, and argues that the advisors perceived their mission as an important part of US strategy and themselves as both capable trainers and exporters of American ideals.

THE COLD WAR, THE ARMED FORCES, AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE

Following the defeat of Germany in 1945, relations between the United States and the Soviet Union deteriorated rapidly. American policy makers, influenced by dire intelligence reports, perceived the Soviet Union as an aggressive state interested not in territorial expansion and exporting international communism. The Soviets maintained strong military forces in East Germany and elsewhere. War-torn Europe and Asia appeared vulnerable to Soviet attack and internal, communist-led upheaval. It seemed that the United States helped defeat fascism only to face an even greater threat of communism.

From the end of World War II through the early 1960s, US foreign policy dealt with the perceived threat of the Soviet Union in a multitude of ways. President Harry S. Truman established precedents during his administration that later presidents followed with modification. The "Truman Doctrine" accepted that it was too dangerous to try and oust communism from where it already existed, in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. US strategy would instead concentrate on preventing communism from spreading. This eventually evolved into the strategy of containment. Before the open hostilities of the

Korean War, Truman hoped to achieve this mainly through military and economic assistance, which would stabilize and strengthen those nations threatened by Soviet attack or communist infiltration. By the end of the 1940s, President Truman also began strengthening US forces in in West Germany, to deter Soviet aggression, and responded with significant force to the invasion of South Korea in 1950. President Dwight D. Eisenhower continued the policy of containment and added to it massive retaliation, essentially hoping to deter the Soviets from aggressive activity by threatening them with nuclear annihilation. Critics argued that massive retaliation was an inflexible strategy which did little to prevent smaller threats and did not remove the need for deployment of US troops in Japan, South Korea, West Germany, and elsewhere. Eisenhower kept military assistance as a method to combat communism, expanding support from Europe to Asia and the Middle East. President John F. Kennedy inherited Eisenhower's nuclear arsenal but increased spending on conventional forces and replaced much of military assistance with economic assistance. Major assistance continued to Southeast Asia, however, where the US entangled itself well into the 1970s.[1]

Just as American foreign policy went through considerable changes during the Cold War, so too did the armed services. The Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and newly independent Air Force all experienced budgetary tumult, changing missions, and

[1] Robert R. Bowie and Richard H. Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Saki Dockrill, *Eisenhower's New-Look National Security Policy, 1953-1961* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996); John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin, 2006); Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security , the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993); and Arnold A. Offner, *Another Such Victory: President Truman and the Cold War, 1945-1953* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002).

overseas commitments. In the immediate post war, the defense budget fell dramatically and demobilization reduced the vast World War II military to a fraction of its former size. Budgets and manpower ceilings increased during the crisis of the Korean War, as the Truman administration bolstered conventional forces. Defense dollars shifted again during the Eisenhower presidency, as the fiscal conservative emphasized nuclear weaponry over conventional forces.

While budgets fluctuated so too did missions. The air force became the primary striking force, with intercontinental nuclear-armed bombers intended to destroy military and civilian targets in the Soviet Union. The navy also developed strike ability, developing atomic-powered submarines armed with nuclear-tipped Polaris missiles. Even the army fixed atomic warheads to missiles and artillery. The army and marines, concerned throughout the 1950s that they were to become security guards for nuclear weapon bases, fought in Korea, deployed to Lebanon, and formed the 7th Army in West Germany. All the services shared security duties around the world, in Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, Western Europe, far flung Pacific bases, and the continental United States.[2]

Throughout these years of crisis and change, military assistance remained a consistent feature of American Cold War strategy. The first assistance occurred in 1947,

[2] Donald A. Carter, *Forging the Shield: The US Army in Europe, 1951-1962* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2015); Robert Futrell *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine: A History of Basic Thinking in the United States Air Force, 1907-1964*, vol. 1 (Montgomery, AL: Air University, 1971); Brian Linn, *The Echo of Battle: The Army's Way of War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009); Allan R. Millett, Peter Maslowski, and William B. Feis, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States, 1607-2012* (New York: Free Press, 2012); and Ingo Trauchweizer, *The Cold War Army: Building Deterrence for Limited War* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2008).

when Congress appropriated $400 million for Greece and Turkey, which the Americans feared was also under threat.[3] Aid later spread to the Republic of China and Iran to deal with specific threats, and then to Western Europe and finally the rest of Middle East and Asia. The support had great symbolic value, serving as proof to allies that Washington would act to ensure their security. Allies often reciprocated with base rights for US forces and general guarantees of alliance and support in the case of general war. A major objective of military assistance was improving American security without directly committing American troops. This was in part due to the terrible state of the armed forces in the late 1940s. Rapid demobilization after WWII left the army and marines with only a dozen understrength divisions. The navy shrank from an 8,000-ship behemoth to a fleet of barely a thousand vessels. Even the newly-independent air force had been trimmed to less than forty aircraft groups (from 218 in 1945), only a few of those B-29s capable of delivering atomic bombs.[4] Improving allies' strength could indirectly increase American security, without the need for major US mobilization.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) led military assistance planning. It took approximately twenty to twenty four months of planning, debate, and analysis for them to submit their recommendations on military aid. These recommendations went up the chain to the secretary of defense, then to the President (also advised by the State

[3] Kenneth W. Condit, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1947-1949*, vol. 2, *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff* (Washington, DC: Office of Joint History, 1996), 34 and 11.

[4] Condit, *Joint Chiefs*, vol. 2, 11. A "group" was 40-60 aircraft and a division 15-20,000 troops.

Department), and finally to congress.[5] Congress never approved long term aid packages; all were done in yearly increments. In 1948, the Joint Chiefs prioritized the intended recipients of military assistance. The Low Countries, France, and Britain were "Priority 1," with "Substantial" help. Other European countries, including Greece, Italy, and Denmark, were Priority 2 or 3, with "Limited" aid. Turkey was Priority 2, but other Middle Eastern and Asian countries, including Iran, Pakistan, and the Republic of China, were Priority 4 and 5. The only Latin American countries to make this list were Mexico and Brazil, at Priority 6.[6]

After providing aid to Greece and Turkey, President Truman began work on a much larger assistance package for Western Europe. After months of deliberation and several rounds of debate and voting, congress passed the Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1949, appropriating $1.314 billion, the significant majority for Western Europe. The remainder went to Greece, Turkey, Iran, South Korea, the Republic of China, and the Philippines. However, military planners considered even this amount of money insufficient to arm Europe. Original plans, developed before the passage of the bill, were revised. Service chiefs cut over $100 million in weapons, supplies, and equipment intended for NATO to fit the new budget.[7] At no point in the Cold War did military assistance receive the budget that the JCS believed it needed. The president and secretary of defense trimmed from the JCS estimates, and congress cut further from that.

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[5] Kenneth W. Condit, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1955-1956,* vol. 6, *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff* (Washington, DC: Office of Joint History, 1998), 241.

[6] Condit, *Joint Chiefs,* vol. 2, 221.

[7] Condit, *Joint Chiefs,* vol. 2, 232 and 234.

As will be seen in the coming chapters, funding available for military assistance had significant effect on the advisory missions.

US policy makers believed that the Korean War was a sign that the Soviet Union could soon attack the West, President Truman requested additional assistance dollars. Congress approved an additional $4 billion, again overwhelmingly destined for Western Europe. Assistance climbed again when 1951 the legislature appropriated $5.788 billion for military aid in 1951: $4.818 billion to Western Europe, $396 million to the Mediterranean and the Middle East, $535 million to the Far East (including French Indochina, the Republic of China, and Republic of Korea), and a little over $38 million to Latin America.[8] All of these quantities were still significantly below the suggestions of military planners.

The spike in assistance spending did not continue, however. In 1952, congressional leaders, who had recovered from the shock of the Korean invasion and were frustrated by more requests for elevated aid deliveries, cut military assistance from the administration's request of $5.3 billion to $4.2 billion.[9] This reduction came at the exact time that European nations stalled in their own military armament and expansion, as will be shown in Chapter 3. The changing opinions of congress and the budgetary process made long-term assistance planning difficult. Funding fluctuated for the rest of the decade, falling precipitously in FY 1955 and 1956 but increasing slightly by the end

[8] Walter S. Poole, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1950-1952*, vol. 4, *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff* (Washington, DC: Office of Joint History, 1998), 25 and 45.

[9] Poole, *Joint Chiefs*, vol. 4, 61.

of the decade: $3.23 billion in Fiscal Year 1954, $1.19 billion in 1955, $1.02 billion in 1956, and $2.01 billion in 1957.[10] The Joint Chiefs of Staff believed these numbers were entirely too low to meet the security needs of US partners, but did not propose reductions to their own services' budgets to compensate.

The assistance budgets were small compared to US expenditures on its own armed forces. The total US defense budget in Fiscal Year 1948 was to be $9.757 billion, much greater than any single year of military assistance spending.[11] The Korean War greatly increased US spending, as the armed forces fought on the peninsula and reinforced positions in Europe. Congress approved a defense budget for Fiscal Year 1952 of over $60 billion. For military assistance, FY-1952 saw only $5.18 billion.[12] During the relatively lean years of the Eisenhower administration, defense spending still far outstripped assistance funding. Congress appropriated a defense budget in FY 1959 of over $39 billion, and foreign military assistance of $1.5 billion.[13] Throughout the period in question, aid to Latin America was dwarfed by aid to Europe and Asia. FY 1952, the largest single year of military assistance, saw almost $6 billion overall but only $38 million to Latin America. By FY 1958, the Joint Chiefs of Staff suggested that all

[10] Condit, *Joint Chiefs*, vol. 6, 239.

[11] Condit, *Joint Chiefs*, vol. 2, 34 and 11.

[12] Poole, *Joint Chiefs*, vol. 4, 72.

[13] Byron R. Fairchild and Walter S. Poole, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1957-1960,* vol. 7, *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff* (Washington, DC: Office of Joint History, 2000), 36 and 73.

of Latin America receive $28.7 million. By comparison, the JCS suggested that Denmark receive $38.9 million, and the Netherlands $131.6 million.[14]

Though small relative to the defense budget, assistance spending represented considerable financial commitment. Monetary data from the 1940s and 1950s puts billion-dollar assistance budgets in perspective. In 1957, a one-family house in Washington, D.C. cost $12,309 in 1947.[15] An F-84 fighter jet, a common aircraft delivered to allies, cost $212,241 each in 1950.[16]

By the time John F. Kennedy took office in 1961, military assistance was drawing to a close. Kennedy argued that international security could be better preserved, and US alliances strengthened, by economic and civic aid rather than military aid. Military assistance continued at low levels during his time in office, falling to $1.6 billion in FY 1962 and $1.3 billion in FY 1963. Furthermore, the assistance budgets for some missions, including the Republic of Vietnam, were actually transferred to the defense budget. Only in Latin America did Kennedy's administration increase assistance spending, to $55 million, a paltry number compared to other missions. [17]
This spending, however truncated, did ship immense amounts of weaponry to allied nations. For example, by 31 January 1953 American military assistance provided

[14] Condit, *Joint Chiefs,* vol. 6, 264.

[15] U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957* (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1960), 166, 168, and 395.

[16] Marcelle S. Knaack, *Encyclopedia of US Air Force Aircraft and Missile Systems,* vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, 1978), 31.

[17] Walter S. Poole, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1961-1964,* vol. 8, *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff* (Washington, DC: Office of Joint History, 2011), 219-220, 224, and 228.

6,023,410 tons of materiel to its allies, including 22,232 tanks and combat vehicles, 21,487 pieces of artillery, and 3,211 aircraft.[18] This weaponry and equipment bolstered allies, whose strength US leaders considered vital. Allies had practical and symbolic value. They added divisions to fight the Soviets and providing bases for American forces, and provided markets to US businesses and added prestige to the American cause. Washington could point to their collection of allies as evidence that their system was superior.[19] President Truman considered rearmament of European allies important enough that he pushed military assistance during an election year, even when he faced a greatly strengthened Republican party in congress. Eisenhower also believed in aid's importance, saying early in his presidency that many American allies, in Europe and elsewhere, "'would certainly have gone Communist had it not been for the money we had spent on them in recent years.'"[20]

The officers, enlisted men, and civilian employees of the military assistance advisory groups oversaw the delivery of this aid and trained allied forces in its use. They hoped to not only train allied forces to fight more like Americans, with an emphasis on mechanized warfare and efficient logistics, but also wanted to impart to those allies American ideals of apolitical military professionalism. The remainder of this chapter examines the general organization and objectives of the military assistance

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[18] Poole, *Joint Chiefs*, vol. 4, 73.

[19] H. W. Brands, *The Devil we Knew: Americans and the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 9-11, 30, 54-56.

[20] Richard M. Leighton, *Strategy, Money, and the New Look: 1953-1956*, vol. 3 of *History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense* (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2001), 492.

advisory groups (MAAGs), how they were trained, and how their members perceived their mission and their place within greater US Cold War strategy.

A TYPICAL MAAG: ORGANIZATION AND DUTIES

Military assistance advisory groups varied in size, but were typically about fifty officers and men, predominantly from the US Army, led by a brigadier or major general, usually titled the "chief." Most MAAGs were small outfits. In December 1949, the group in Iran had fifty five men, mostly officers.[21] In May 1950, MAAG-Denmark had thirty eight officers and enlisted, and MAAG-Italy had forty-two.[22] Advisory groups were headquartered in the ally's capital city, so that it could be near both the US embassy and the host nations' armed forces headquarters. Most personnel served a tour of one or two years, though chiefs sometimes stayed longer. MAAGs occasionally expanded for a specialized task, such as an accelerated training program.

The MAAG chief played numerous roles. He was head advisor to the host nation's military leadership and liaised between them and the military assistance apparatus. He acted as a diplomat, conducting interviews with host nation politicians

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[21] Major General Vernon Evans, "March 1949 Monthly Report," 1 Apr 1949, F Activities Report Files, 1949, United States Military Mission with the Iranian Army and the Military Assistance Advisory Group to Iran (hereafter MAAG Iran), Box 3, E 171, RG 334, NARA.

[22] Brigadier General Ralph Snavely, "Reports of Activities, MAAG-Denmark, May 1950," F 319.1-2, Reports, MAAG Denmark, Box 16, E 95, RG 334, NARA; and Brigadier General H. Norman Schwartzkopf, "MAAG, Italy Report of Activites for May 1950," F Monthly Report, May 1950, MAAG Italy, Box 15, E 245, RG 334, NARA. Brigadier General Schwartzkopf was the father of "Stormin' Norman."

and journalists, and attended significant cultural events and social gatherings. He also led the advisory group's training of foreign personnel and oversight of incoming assistance materiel. The exact rank of a MAAG chief depended on both the size of the group and the relative political importance of the advisory mission. The MAAG chief to France was a lieutenant general; the chief to Ethiopia, on the other hand, was only a colonel. In instances where aid was primarily for the development of an air force, the chief was an air force general instead of an army general. Few groups were led by admirals, and fewer still by marine corps generals.

The advisors themselves were mostly officers and senior noncommissioned officers. The MAAGs tried to assign advisors of roughly equal rank to their counterparts. Therefore, advisors who acted as instructors to enlisted men or noncommissioned officers were themselves senior noncommissioned officers; advisors assigned to battalion commanders were typically a major or colonel; and so on. MAAG units had many more officers than enlisted men.

Advisors had heavy workloads and busy schedules. They visited units in the field and led instruction at host military schools, met with their foreign counterparts for one-on-one consultation and discussion, and managed huge deliveries of military aid. Some missions, like in Turkey and Iran, required long distance travel by air or jeep, to train or inspect units at far flung bases. In these situations, the traveling alone could consume entire work days. One researcher noted, in 1965, that "at any given time, the American advisor can be a simple purveyor of technical advice in country or a complex soldier-statesman-psychologist figure in another, depending on the conditions." Even

being a "simpler purveyor of technical advice" could prove difficult in developing countries, when trying to teach "jet age mechanics to offspring of an ox cart civilization." [23]

A MAAG's most important objective was to try and create self-sufficiency in the allied force. Guidelines issued by the United States European Command in Germany ordered them to direct all their actions toward "practicable assumption of the full burden of defense by the host country upon the withdrawal of the MAAG and the termination of United States grant aid."[24] MAAG reports regularly mentioned how much their host nation contributed to defense, and how far the armed forces were from no longer needing major US support. Self sufficiency was a major US objective, but few aid recipients ever achieved it, in part because of the limited budgets for military assistance. The advisors also wanted host nation armed forces to adopt American practices and standards of maintenance and logistics. This was a difficult mission, as few of the world's militaries placed as much emphasis on these factors as did the US. In most missions, battlefield proficiency came third. The job was complex and demanding, and US advisors themselves had relatively little training to accomplish their multifaceted missions.

[23] Walter G. Hermes, "Survey of the Development of the Role of the US Army Military Advisor," 1965, USAHEC.

[24] "Basic Directive to Chiefs of Military Assistance Advisory Groups," 8 Jun 1956, USAHEC.

AD HOC ADVISORS

Before 1958, the armed forces lacked formal advisory training. The services selected officers for MAAG missions based mainly on availability and assumed that professional experience in mobilization, training, and combat served as sufficient advisory training. In the large scale assistance build-ups of the late 1940s and early 1950s, this ad hoc system worked well enough, thanks in part to the considerable military experience of US officers. One MAAG officer thought that Americans had an "aura of invincibility" after two victorious wars which allied militaries respected.[25]

Officer selection for MAAG duty was theoretically rigorous. They could only be assigned if they had an unblemished personal record, had never been passed over for promotion because they were "not fully qualified," and were well-educated and physically healthy. The Department of Defense instructed that offices were not to be assigned to MAAG as their last tour before retirement, to ensure the selection of younger, more vibrant officers, and so that an advisor would not retire on the job.[26] Enlisted men, who primarily performed administrative tasks in the advisory groups, needed to be of top quality to handle the enormous office workloads. One advisorwrote in 1960 that MAAG personnel should also be morally upstanding. Living overseas, often without dependents, provided many "opportunities for such practices as immoral

[25] A.D. Boggs, "Career Program for Military Assistance Personnel," 1960, Army War College Student Paper (hereafter AWCSP), USAHEC.

[26] Roswell Gilpatric, "Selection of Personnel for MAAG's and Missions," 9 Apr 1962, General Subject Files M-R, Box 7, Henry C. Newton Papers (hereafter Newton Papers), USAHEC.

living and black marketing," especially in "certain less developed countries." To resist these temptations, American soldiers needed "temperate and acceptable moral standards."[27]

The actual work of advising often required direct training of the host nation's armed forces, preferably by demonstration and example rather than classroom instruction. Major General Lawrence Dewey, chief of the Turkish advisory group in the late 1950s, believed that the improvements were made because "my people got out there with the Turks and showed them how to do it, showed them what Command Control and Staff Supervision was. . . . all the words and pamphlets and papers don't do any good." Convincing senior officers to use American techniques was the key: "until you sell the man at the top; and he has become convinced that that is the right thing to do, all the brains and drive and initiative on the part of the small fry do not do any good."[28]

Advisory work was time-consuming and difficult. One officer, from MAAG-Vietnam, wrote that "the scope of the advisor's mission is broad and covers all aspects of military operations from the finite detail of administration to the broad tactical concept." He worked long hours with few breaks, "under little or no command supervision," and in rugged physical conditions. The advisor interacted with people of a different culture, whose outlook and attitude could be much different than an American's. Such an environment demanded "initiative, self-sufficiency, tact, patience,

[27] Edward W. McGregor, "The Ugly American Military Adviser," 1960, AWCSP, USAHEC.

[28] "Middle East MAAG Chiefs Conference, Karachi, Pakistan," 19-20 Feb 1957, USAHEC.

emotional stability, determination, and above all professional military competence."[29] MAAG competed with other high priority missions to get the kind of officers who could fit this high standard.

Most officers had little or no specialized advisory training when they arrived in country. The majority of advisor training occurred "on the job" and from pamphlets and books at the MAAG unit. Advisors serving with MAAG-Vietnam in the early 1960s read "Guidelines for Advisors: Professional Duties and Interests," which listed many of their duties and expectations. The booklet's instructions were representative of MAAGs around the world. Beginning with a reminder that the Americans were only advisors and had no command authority over the Vietnamese, it urged advisors to spend as much time as possible with their units, to respect their customs and culture, and to inspire "initiative and inventiveness." The advisor was to encourage unit and equipment inspections, take note of significant events, and keep records so that later advisors could take advantage of their predecessor's experience, all without appearing arrogant or stepping on the toes of a Vietnamese officer. Advisors should let their counterpart take credit for ideas suggested by the advisor. "Always exercise patience in all your dealings with your Vietnamese counterpart," the booklet urged. "Never expect the job to be done at the snap of a finger—and don't snap your finger." Even in poorly managed units, Americans should find something to praise, and only criticize in private. Though the booklet mentioned Asian face saving and other "oriental" habits, it also noted that "Vietnamese desire appreciation, recognition, and understanding; they seek security and

[29] Norman H. Bykerk, "MAAG Vietnam—Manacled by Geneva," 1958, AWCSP, USAHEC.

attention; they like to feel important, like to contribute, and like to belong. In brief, they react to these things just as you do."[30]

FORMAL TRAINING OF ADVISORS: THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE INSTITUTE

The hectic first decade of military assistance, without formal training of advisors and uneven personnel selection, resulted by the mid 1950s in a program of assistance that varied enormously from country to country, not only in the types of aid administered but also in the basic procedures of advising and assistance. This made it more difficult to measure progress and created turn-over problems, not to mention effects on the quality of advising. When officers' tours ended, they were replaced by new personnel unfamiliar with the program's setup. Many MAAG personnel also seemed unaware of their mission's political context and its importance to overall American policy.

The Department of Defense began research on an advisors' school in 1957 in an effort to resolve the problems of inconsistent advisor training. In November of that year, the Department of the Army, tasked with administering the project, contacted retired Brigadier General Henry C. Newton to act as a consultant for the school's creation. During his army career, the Illinois general commanded five schools—the Armor Force Officer School, the Army Intelligence School, the Armored School, and two institutions in postwar Germany—and was widely respected as a military educator.[31]

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[30] "Lessons Learned Number 28—Guidelines for Advisors," 18 Apr, 1963, USAHEC.

[31] "Biographical Sketch," General Subject Files A-L, Box 6, Newton Papers, USAHEC.

Newton led an exhaustive study, conducting interviews of perspective instructors and other experts for four months. He coordinated the writing of instructional material, worked with the three services to determine a yearly student load, contacted civilian academics and specialists, and visited numerous military schools and public universities. One of Newton's major decisions was who would actually operate the school. Because it would be used by all the services, it would be difficult to convince any one service to operate the facilities and pay the instructors. Public universities, with lengthy winter and summer vacations, did not fit the rhythm of the school's projected monthly training cycle, with classes coming and going year round. Newton and his superiors chose the private think tank American Institute for Research (AIR). The AIR itself studied MAAG operations, had research contracts with the Department of Defense, and its offices were near Washington, DC.[32]

General Newton, with the help of AIR, created the Military Assistance Institute (MAI). The school officially opened on 2 September, 1958, after months of heavy preparation. Newton and his team worked 12-14 hour days to get the school operational, and he described it as "the most time consuming and tiring operation I had ever participated in. . . . [I] remarked many times, that [I] would far rather be 'jumping off in an attack' in combat than what I have been doing." He was proud of the work he and his

[32] "Statement of Brigadier General Henry C. Newton, USAR (RET), Director of the Military Assistance Institute, Before the House of Representatives Committee on Post Office and Civil Service Subcommittee on Manpower Utilization," Box 7, Newton Papers, USAHEC.

"well-knit, dedicated group" had accomplished, and believed they contributed to America's Cold War effort.[33]

The school, using office space in the Washington Building of the Arlington Towers in Virginia, operated ten classes per fiscal year, with roughly one hundred students per class. Slots in the courses were divided between the services—fifty five for the army (who had the largest presence in MAAG missions), fifteen for the navy and marine corps, and thirty for the air force. Slots were sometimes made available to other government institutions. Eleven faculty members, a mix of soldiers and AIR civilians, taught the classes.[34] Though many considered the MAI an effective institution, it was never used as a training center for all advisors. During the MAI's operations from 1958 to 1968, approximately 9,000 advisors completed course work at the institute.[35] That number was spread over a decade, with less than a thousand graduates annually, and represented only a fraction of all advisors. For example, in December 1958 alone, there were more than 7,000 Americans assigned to various MAAG missions around the world, a number that remained fairly level into the 1960s (aside from increases in Vietnam). The relatively slow rate of graduation, with only a hundred students a month, would never have fully trained all the advisors necessary to fill MAAG units. Nevertheless, MAAG officers generally considered the MAI a boon to the advisory mission. Colonel

[33] "Statement of Brigadier General Henry C. Newton."

[34] Walter Choinsky, "The Military Assistance Institute: An Historical Summary of its Organization, Program, and Accomplishments, 1958-1968," 1969, USAHEC.

[35] *Ibid.*

John Erickson urged that all advisers heading for duty in Vietnam be MAI graduates.[36] Artillery Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Ferguson, writing only a year after the school first launched, suggested that the school be expanded so that all MAAG personnel could attend.[37] Lieutenant Colonel Clayton H. Moore, a Vietnam MAAG advisor, considered the school excellent and believed it greatly improved the quality of US advisors.[38]

The month-long course at MAI was broken into four parts. Instructors devoted week one to "absorption of factual material," such as the historical background of MAP and the threat of global communism. Week two featured "Instruction in Advisor techniques." Week three looked at the organizational and logistical difficulties of "grant aid planning," the analysis and paperwork required to plan US shipments to foreign militaries. The fourth week saw practical exercises, such as role-play. Throughout the program, students reviewed heavy reading loads and listened to guest lecturers. The curriculum avoided language instruction, considering it a "service responsibility." MAI faculty modified their programs of instruction to keep their material up to date and to fit the suggestions made by MAAG personnel who communicated with the school after their deployments.[39]

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[36] John Erickson, "Impact of the United States Military Assistance Advisory Group in Vietnam," 1961, AWCSP, USAHEC.

[37] Thomas Ferguson, "Progress of United States Military Advisory Groups in Allied Nations," 1959, AWCSP, USAHEC.

[38] Clayton H. Moore, "MAAG Duty in Underdeveloped Areas," 1962, AWCSP, USAHEC.

[39] Choinsky, "Military Assistance Institute."

MAI instructors wanted to eliminate "bad advisors," those who did not take their job seriously or acted disrespectfully toward allied military forces and foreign cultures. In training aids at MAI and in student papers at the Army War College and the Air University, students wrote about their experiences with and around poor advisors. Lieutenant Colonel Charles Thebaud, an advisor in Vietnam, estimated that five to ten percent of American advisors were of low quality and did considerable damage to US efforts, by way of unbecoming personal conduct and performing substandard work. He wrote that the US could "ill-afford the luxury of sending misfits to Southeast Asia."[40] Moore, also an advisor in Vietnam, observed numerous MAAG personnel whose abilities he thought were "barely acceptable and their overall contribution to the MAAG mission was negligible."[41]

One exercise designed to counter bad advising involved an audio recording of fictional Major Lemon, an advisor to "Protonia." In the recording, Lemon gives a briefing to a new MAAG section chief and makes every possible mistake imaginable for an advisor. He drops racist remarks about the Protonians, is ignorant of their military, society, and politics, and says of his direct counterpart: "Since all Protonians look alike to me, I didn't recognize him." Major Lemon's apathy, bigotry, lack of record keeping, and complaining in the briefing were all based on advisors' accounts of poor officers

[40] *Ibid.*

[41] Moore, "MAAG Duty."

overseas. After listening to the recording, MAI students were to write down everything wrong about it and then discuss with their classmates.[42]

Another publication available at MAI quoted former students of the program. One warned of "MAAGitis," in which an advisor lost the desire to improve the allied military and instead just tried to maintain the status-quo. Another suggested of some advisors that "their prime interest [appeared] to be 'The Last Party,' 'The Next Party,' and when they are going home."[43]

MAAG officers were aware of the "Ugly American" stereotype, and wrote about the need to avoid it overseas. Lieutenant Colonel Thebaud warned that communist propaganda in South Vietnam portrayed Americans as boorish, materialistic, and bigoted, and if advisors behaved this way, they would confirm the preconceived notions of many Vietnamese.[44] One to way to avoid this problem was to mingle with the population rather than be isolated in American compounds, which MAAG guides country guides and orientation brochures actively encouraged. That Americans clustered together in their own compounds was all the more obvious since communist advisors were ordered to "eat, work and live with their counterparts."[45]

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[42] "The MAP Advisor," 1963, USAHEC. During the presentation, Major Lemon knocks over his maps, and his sergeant cannot figure out the projector.

[43] "Teaching aids to be used during Case Study on Advising—extracted from the Student Field Reports," MAI Reports and Studies, Box 7, Newton Papers, USAHEC.

[44] Charles C. Thebaud, "MAAG Adviser, Southeast Asia," 1963, AWCSP, USAHEC.

[45] "Teaching aids to…".

SOLDIER DIPLOMATS

Nearly everyone involved with the advisory and assistance mission, including MAI instructors, emphasized the idea of the soldier diplomat. To be an effective advisor, an American had to be equal parts military professional, patient diplomat, and amiable colleague. A "spirit of friendliness" was necessary.[46] Advisors had to be extremely careful with their advice. Though many soldiers in allied nations appreciated honesty from their American advisors, and wanted to improve their own military capabilities, Americans could not afford to appear arrogant. Strained relations between an advisor and his counterpart could threaten an entire MAAG mission.

This was a delicate balance to strike. One essay, by Lieutenant Colonel John R. Vitek (formerly an advisor of the Nationalist Chinese and the Thais) instructed MAI students to learn their counterpart's habits and personality because he was "the only person who can effectively implement your planned program." Americans needed to give advice carefully, because it could be construed as implied criticism or even arrogance. Advisors had to develop a strong rapport with their counterpart before real advisory work could commence. Understanding the allied nation's culture was of utmost importance and received heavy attention in MAI coursework: "How do you convince a Moslem that it is necessary to plan ahead when it is his belief that 'Allah will provide'? How do you convince senior military officers in a country where 'face' is a factor, that it is no disgrace to attend a course of instruction where the instructors are

[46] Moore, "MAAG Duty."

junior in rank." Vitek suggested, as a common courtesy, that an advisor not visit his counterpart's units without his knowledge, and warned that poor advising would leave "bitterness and frustrations" for both parties.[47] Another advisor reminded his readers, though, that however cordial the advisor's relationship was with his counterpart the advisor must "not close his eyes to [military] deficiencies because of friendship."[48]

An advisor's role as a soldier-diplomat extended beyond his time training and advising. He had to be on his best behavior represent of the United States at dinner parties, state events, and when off-duty. Advisors were warned against being pulled into political arguments with foreign nationals. MAI students read an essay called "How to Get Along with People," which gave tips for how advisors could face anti-American attitudes abroad. "Don't argue," the essay suggested, because a heated argument would only serve to make Americans appear impetuous and combative. Instead of flatly disagreeing, an advisor should reply with, "Yes, but . . ." to try and soften the blow of his disagreement. It was also important to try and determine if the critic of US policy was trying to draw the advisor into an emotional argument to make a scene. The essay ended with sample discussions, showing advisors possible ways to answer difficult questions from foreigners, reminding the advisor that winning the argument was not really necessary: "You have accomplished much if you leave the impression that there is

[47] "The MAP Advisor."

[48] Bykerk, "MAAG Vietnam."

something in the United States point of view, and that Americans are tolerant, broad-minded and can get along with people."[49]

Many MAAG officers were both aware of and sensitive to the delicacy of their relationship with allied militaries. Time and again, MAAG personnel and MAI instructors repeated the need to be diplomatic with allied forces—suggesting advisors commonly failed to do so. A MAI teaching aid listed important attributes for advisors, and almost all of them related to tact: advisors had to understand they could not direct action, only advise; that "patience is a mandatory attribute;" to "follow-up, but don't harass" about issues with the counterpart; and to present new ideas as suggestions.[50] Thebaud, writing about Vietnam, noted the need for a "high tolerance for failure and frustration" and the ability to retain "buoyance and resourcefulness".[51] Soldier-diplomacy could continue even after a MAAG officer's tour ended. Moore suggested that former advisors maintain contact with allied counterparts by letter writing. This could help cement long-term friendships between the United States and its allies.[52]

Being a soldier-diplomat also included respect of the local culture and customs. Though some advisors were critical of Americans in this regard, it seems that at least in Thailand, the MAAG worked to observe national events. For example, the MAAG

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[49] "The MAP Advisor." An entire seminar paper could probably be written about the stock answers provided in MAI documents, to issues as varied as American foreign policy, American problems with race, and the nature of American marriages.

[50] "Teaching aids to . . .".

[51] Thebaud ,"MAAG Adviser."

[52] Moore, "MAAG Duty."

observed both US and Thai holidays, including what the Americans called "Buddhist Lent" and the King's birthday.[53] In 1958, a MAAG memorandum reminded Americans of an official two week mourning period for death of the "head" of Buddhism in Thailand, His Holiness Kromluang Vajirananavamsa. The memo reported that Americans could still have dinners together, but they should avoid social events out of respect for the fallen patriarch.[54]

THE LANGUAGE PROBLEM

A capable soldier-diplomat's efforts were meaningless if his interlocutor could not understand English. MAAG personnel agreed that language training or lack thereof was extremely important to military assistance and advising. Some argued, however, that it was both infeasible and unnecessary to extensively train American soldiers in language and believed that interpreters and native speakers of English were the best ways for MAAG personnel to advise and train indigenous forces. Others proposed a major expansion of language training—for the services to expand their language schools, for the Department of Defense to pay for personnel to go to universities and private institutions for intense instruction, and for such language training to be both mandatory and beneficial to an officer's military career.

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[53] "Memorandum Number 1, Holidays-1957," 9 Jan 1957, F Numbered Memorandum (Record Set) 1957, MAAG-Thailand, Box 2, E 261, Record Group E 334, NARA.

[54] Lieutenant Colonel N. F. Browning, "Mourning for Supreme Patriarch," 12 Nov 1958, F Unnumbered Memorandum 1958, MAAG Thailand, Box 3, E 261, RG 334, NARA.

The armed forces' language problems were due to the historic isolation of US forces. For most of American history, the military's primary objective had been continental defense. Coupled with a lack of international alliances, this meant there had been no professional reason to learn foreign languages. Language training services available to military personnel were quite small. The US Army Language School, for example, trained only 200 officers a year. Though most officers had experienced some language education in college, and Americans generally took language classes in secondary school, this education rarely produced fluency, and was limited French, Spanish, and German.[55] It appears from the historical record if any MAAG officers were children of immigrants (or recent immigrants themselves), they did not bring any foreign language proficiency with them.

MAAG personnel almost universally understood language ability as important. A learning aid from the Military Assistance Institute claimed language skill as a "definite asset."[56] Lieutenant Colonel Moore called American language deficiencies "an extreme hindrance and obstacle."[57] An article in *Military Review*, a journal published by the Army's Command and General Staff College, described language skill as a "sidearm."[58]

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[55] William P. Jones, "Language Training for the Officer Corps," 1960, AWCSP, USAHEC.

[56] "Teaching aid."

[57] Moore, "MAAG Duty."

[58] Colonel Walter E. Kraus, "The Soldier's New Sidearm: Languages," *Military Review 38* (December 1958): 50-56.

Inability to communicate in the host nation's language restricted MAAG officers to either working with English-speaking military counterparts, who were rare outside Western Europe, or to working through an interpreter. Using interpreters was fraught with difficultly. MAAG officers worried about wasted time and lost intent when interpreters could not translate an American idiom or misrepresented the advisor's tone. Though a few MAAG officers considered interpreters sufficient, most thought of them only as an alternative to no communication—one called interpreters a "poor crutch" best fixed by better American language training.[59] Some commented on the tendency of Asian interpreters to heavily modify the conversation, changing both what the adviser and advisee said to "save face" and avoid potential embarrassment.[60]

Former MAAG officers proposed a number of measures to improve language training. Some suggested increased enrollment at the service language schools. Most preferred to incentivize language education rather than dictate its requirement, mainly through bonuses. Army engineer William P. Jones suggested financial compensation for those who took on the more challenging languages, such as Arabic or Vietnamese, a policy followed in the British, Spanish, and Canadian militaries and the Central Intelligence Agency. Though language was more easily learned at a young age, Jones suspected that many American officers used their age as an excuse to not learn. He

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[59] Moore, "MAAG Duty."

[60] Many MAAG officers were quite concerned about the Asian tendency to "save face" (that is, avoid appearing wrong or mistaken in front of others). But one advisor, Colonel Bykerk, argued that face was over-emphasized by American observers. "A simple straightforwardness firmly based on mutual respect and demonstrated competence very quickly dispels 'face' considerations" (Bykerk, "MAAG Vietnam—Manacled by Geneva").

argued that if languages could be "taught successfully to the blind, the insane, and low-IQ prisoners," surely they could be taught to middle-aged majors and colonels. Against the argument that a major institution like the army could not abruptly improve its language deficiency, he countered that the State Department had faced the same problem and greatly alleviated it in only a few years.[61]

Some MAAG officers suggested that language training include an adviser's dependents. "The foreign vocabulary needed by a wife is far different than that required of her husband," wrote Army Lieutenant Colonel Thomas G. Ferguson. She needed to communicate in situations such as hospital trips (for "when her baby is born"), help with shopping, directions for domestic help, and "niceties" for entertaining.[62] Lieutenant Colonel Edward McGregor, whose 1960 paper riffed on *The Ugly American*, suggested the wives of servicemen audit unclassified MAI courses and lectures, because the "pretty American" could be an asset to US prestige.[63]

Some officers argued against expanded language training. It was better for locals to learn English, argued Colonel Bykerk, because the size of the American military, its many international deployments, and the expenses involved in training a MAAG officer to speak a foreign language were simply too great.[64] The same MAI training aid that considered language training "a definite asset" quoted another officer as saying

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[61] Jones, "Language Training."

[62] Ferguson, "Progress of United States Military."

[63] McGregor, "The Ugly American Military Adviser."

[64] Bykerk, "MAAG Vietnam."

"Language is not necessary, but nice to know." Writers often repeated the desire that the host country learn English, and that understanding those English speakers was itself a challenge.[65] This passive attitude served the armed forces in previous years, when the locals had "obliged by learning sufficient English."[66]

LONGER TOURS, OR A NEW CAREER PATH?

One way to alleviate the problems of language proficiency and learning the art of advising was to extend the length of advisor tours. Most MAAG tours were one or two years long, which many felt was too short. Bykerk argued that twelve month "hardship" tours (without dependents) were, in fact, several weeks shorter than a year, because they included the time spent leaving and returning to the continental United States. He suggested not counting those transit times, eliminating the "CONUS to CONUS" effect and giving an advisor those extra weeks.[67] Another former advisor argued that the "one-time" system, where most officers only advised once in their career, was a waste of training and needed amendment.[68] Other advisors went much further, suggesting a three year tour with dependents.[69]

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[65] "Teaching aid."

[66] Thebaud ,"MAAG Adviser."

[67] Bykerk, "MAAG Vietnam."

[68] Boggs, "Career Program."

[69] McGregor, "The Ugly American Military Adviser."

Making military advising a career specialty could help many of the advisors' problems. One writer argued that the limitations of creating the career field, that it would tie down capable officers and possibly slow their promotion, was outweighed by the importance of the advisory mission.[70] Another suggested that only officers with at least eight years experience qualify for MAAG positions, and that advising be integrated into the career pattern of their branches.[71] A writer for *Military Review* argued that being an advisor could improve an officer's career rather than be an "'Undesirable Tour of Duty.'" He described advising with the Koreans as a "postgraduate course" for officers, where they could participate in planning, training, and logistical management in a way they could not in the US or elsewhere. The Korean forces were "young, impressionable, and receptive" and gave an American officer plenty of opportunity to gain valuable military experience.[72]

Air Force Lieutenant Colonel John Harris probably went furthest with his recommendations. Harris, who had spent five years with the Spanish and Turkish MAAGs, wrote a 1962 thesis about military assistance for the Air University. The study included a section on the "MAP Quasi Career Specialty," in which Harris proposed requirements for advisors. The services were to only appoint the "very best" officers, with at least ten to twelve years of staff and leadership experience. They would be

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[70] Ferguson, "Progress of United States Military."

[71] Boggs, "Career Program."

[72] Colonel Marby G. Miller, "KMAG: Training Ground for US Officers," *Military Review* 37 (Aug 1957): 39-43.

retained in the advisory specialty for ten years. Such personnel should be rewarded professionally, with rapid advancement and promotion, to encourage other talented officers to apply. Drastic measures were necessary, he argued, because of how hard it was to find good advisors, and the types of abilities they needed: "He must be able to train, plan, program, instruct and implement the guidance and simultaneously develop and maintain amiable personal and professional relations with host country personnel. He must be the type of individual that can quickly sense any change in the host country atmosphere that could jeopardize the program." Indeed, such people must have been limited in number, and needed to be carefully husbanded by the program.[73]

ANTI-COMMUNISM

MAAG officers who wrote about their experiences clearly believed in the threat of world communism. "The Military Assisatnce Program is a principal means of meeting the Communist challenge," wrote Moore, "and the Military Assistance Advisory Groups are primary operating agencies for the implementation of the overall program."[74] MAAG personnel were acutely aware of the similar advisory programs conducted by their communist opponents. Moore worried about the "extra ace" of language ability possessed by the enemy in Vietnam, and Colonel Christian Hanburger

[73] John D. Harris, "The Military Assistance Program: Its Best Use in Achieving US International Security Objectives," 1962, Air University Master's Thesis (hereafter AU Thesis), USAF Collection, Air Force Historical Research Agency , Maxwell AFB (hereafter AFHRA).

[74]Moore , Jr., "MAAG Duty."

warned against the danger of communist propaganda in third world countries, where most bookstores were "communist run." Hanburger also argued that while communist training methods were technically and tactically inferior to those used by the US, they were much better at indoctrinating Asian units into their cause.[75]

MAI instructors trained MAAG personnel on the enemy's intentions, lecturing on communist strategy, tactics, and objectives. Readings on Communist efforts against allied countries and how MAAG personnel should prepare to face these "formidable challenges."[76] One assignment, "Notes on Communism," provided advisors with ready-made responses to provocative questions about the nature of the United States, the Soviet Union, and US strategy. It presented hypothetical questions which could potentially be asked of an American, from a critical and possibly anti-US interlocutor. The document presented carefully worded answers that, mostly, were neither inflammatory nor apologetic. The answers presented almost always made some mention of American freedoms and economic and scientific prowess, and some denigration of communist characteristics. For example:

> Q: Do Americans really want peace?
> A: We do. Short of liberty itself, peace is foremost in the minds of all Americans. . . . No nation need fear aggression by the United States. . . .
>
> Q: Why does the US maintain a ring of bases around the Soviet bloc?
> A: Until the communist-bloc countries can be trusted not to seek domination over other peoples, our defense must be as broad as the dimensions of that threat.

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[75] Colonel Christian Hanburger, "The Formation and Training of Asiatic Armies,", 1955, AWCSP, USAHEC.

[76] "The MAP Advisor."

> Q: Why are you Americans so afraid of the communists?
> A: 'Afraid' is hardly an accurate description. Americans have never been afraid of opposing evil. We feel that communism is a monstrous, evil thing, living on hatred and trying to destroy religion and morality, and the high ideals for which mankind has been striving for centuries.[77]

These aspects of MAI training emphasized the indoctrination of American advisors, to ensure they were aware of US objectives and intentions around the world. The advisor selection process did not include indoctrination as a factor. Potential advisors did not have to answer questionnaires about communism or American objectives. Colonel Norman H. Bykerk, who served with MAAG Vietnam, argued in 1958 that American advisors were not only ignorant of their host country's history and political situation, they were also "almost totally unaware of US interest in the area, the magnitude of the money being spent and the responsibility of a MAAG with respect to both." Some even took on the attitude of occupiers rather than allies.[78] Lieutenant Colonel Thebaud, an Army advisor in Vietnam, noted that the writings of Vo Nguyen Giap, Che Guvera, and Mao Zedong "all stress the importance of exemplary conduct in relations with the population."[79]

[77] "Notes on Communism," Box 7, Newton Papers, USAHEC. The 38-page Q&A collection is a great example of American anti-communist thought and would make fantastic reading for undergraduates.

[78] Bykerk, "MAAG Vietnam."

[79] Thebaud, "MAAG Adviser."

CONCLUSION: WORTHY MEN ON A WORTHY MISSION?

American advisors during the Cold War believed in the efficacy of their mission and considered it an important part of US strategy. At least in the case of the Army War College and the Air University, no former MAAG officer expressed doubt that MAAGs effectively performed a crucial mission. They maintained the MAAGs played "a vital role in keeping free nations free and keeping them oriented toward the West."[80] Harry McNamara, a US Army advisor, argued that military assistance spending was a "bargain," with dollars spent on allied countries generating more security than equivalent amounts spent on US forces. The strategy's symbolism was important, too. Military assistance showed allies that the US was "closely linked" to them, and not likely to evaporate at the first sign of trouble.[81]

The advisors acknowledged that the system was imperfect, especially with American shortcomings in language and the lack of formal advisor training. Many advisors also criticized military assistance budgeting. Lieutenant Colonel Elmer E. Twining argued that the entire strategy of military assistance needed to be redesigned and made into a "continuing policy of the United States." Unpredictable, annual budgets caused confusion and threw off complex training schedules. An advisory group would have to wait to train a tank unit until its vehicles arrived, for example, but needed to send its officers to training in the United States or West Germany months before. This could

[80] Ferguson, "Progress of United States Military."

[81] Harry McNamara, "Operation MAAG," 1961, AWCSP, USAHEC.

lead to wasted time if the timing of the officers' trip or tanks' arrival was off. Host nations sought prestigious heavy weapons and advanced equipment, like jets and tanks, but Twining argued that they really needed more spare parts and basic equipment. Long term budgeting could help solve some of these problems.[82] Colonel Perry B. Priest, agreeing that that assistance planning was disorganized and slow, argued for three-year budgets. Priest also hoped that the president would provide firmer, clearer leadership on assistance programing.[83] Lieutenant Colonel John C. Honea also criticized the budgetary process. Congress's annual renewal of military assistance was a "major impediment to obtaining maximum benefits from the program" because it made long-range defense plans and delivery shipments impossible. He suggested five year budget plans.[84]

Many MAAG officers perceived themselves not as managers of aid shipments, but as trainers and role models who made a significant contribution to American security. The orientation booklet for the advisory group in the United Kingdom told new members of the unit that as a member of the MAAG, "you have a direct role in the effort of the United States to maintain and defend world peace."[85] William Dufault, an air force officer, argued in 1961 that "no other aspect of military assistance so nearly

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[82] Elmer E. Twining, "Development of Long-Range Military Assistance Programs," 1959, AWSCP, USAHEC.

[83] Perry B. Priest, "Military Assistance Programming: Actions Necessary to Implement the Recommendations of the Draper Committee," 1960, AWCSP, USAHEC.

[84] John C. Honea, "Military Assistance Planning and Programming—An Appraisal," 1959, AWSCP, USAHEC.

[85] "Orientation Folder, Military Assistance Advisory Group, United Kingdom," 1954, USAHEC.

provides the weapons for the ideological conflict as does the military assistance training program."[86] Colonel George D. Patterson believed that military assistance strengthened American allies and "contributed to the defense and general welfare of the United States."[87] Some advisors considered themselves directly responsible for their allies. Bykerk wrote that a "unit is but a mirror of the advisor's capabilities," and quoted MAAG-Vietnam Chief General Samuel T. Williams: "'I can look at a Vietnamese unit for ten minutes and be able to determine to a great extent the efficiency and competence of the unit advisor.'"[88]

The realism of these assertions is questionable, considering the brief tours of duty, language problems, and the sheer scale of the American effort. Advisory groups worked to modernize small militaries and make them capable of waging war in the American style, with heavy weapons, advanced technology, and resource-intense logistics. They did this will little specialized training, few personnel, and on short schedules. Nevertheless, the advisors believed that with their know-how they could accomplish their missions and help improve American and international security during the Cold War. In war-torn Greece, where the national government battled communist guerrillas, the MAAGs got their first test.

[86] William F. Dufault "A Concept for Planning United States Military Assistance in the 1960s," 1961, AU Thesis, AFHRA.

[87] George D. Patterson, "Mutual Defense Assistance Program," 1955, AWSCP, USAHEC.

[88] Bykerk, "MAAG Vietnam."

CHAPTER III

MAAGS IN EUROPE

Military assistance advisory groups played an important role in United States strategy in Europe during the first decade of the Cold War. In Greece, Lieutenant General James A. Van Fleet and the advisory group improved the Greek armed forces through training programs and operational and strategic advice. For members of the North Atlantic Treaty, including France, Denmark, and the Netherlands, MAAGs oversaw aid deliveries, trained Europeans on US equipment, and helped to modernize the tactical and logistical capabilities of small states. The advisors delivered huge amounts of aid to the West Germans and imparted to them the American emphasis on maintenance and logistics. In Spain, they helped bring the air force into the jet age. Though the NATO nations did not deploy the number of divisions and air wings that war plans called for, the improved capabilities of their armed forces raised their morale, contributed to deterrence against a Soviet attack, and reduced the need for American ground forces in Europe. The advisors and their training programs contributed to this improvement. However, military assistance to Europe did not remove the perceived need for American forces in Europe, nor did it create self-sufficient NATO forces.

ASSISTANCE BEGINS IN EUROPE: GREECE

For economic, geopolitical, and cultural reasons United States foreign and defense policy prioritized Western European security. American policymakers believed that an economically sound and militarily safe Europe directly increased US security. However, in the years directly after World War II, Europe seemed anything but secure. Infrastructure had been shattered by invasions, occupation, and bombing. Fragile economies could not support basic consumer needs, let alone military spending. Washington worried that such internal weakness invited infiltration or outright attack by the Soviet Union, who held Eastern Europe. The Soviets blocked free elections in Poland and consolidated their economic and military grip on Eastern Europe. A series of war scares in 1946 and 1947—over Turkey, Czechoslovakia, and the Berlin supply corridor—contributed to dire US intelligence estimates, including George Kennan's "Long Telegram" and NSC-68, which expected aggressive Soviet policies. [89]

Europe appeared threatened by communist parties, especially in France and Italy, and open war raged in Greece, where miserable economic and human conditions gave communist forces plenty of political fodder. Despite the massive Marshall Plan, which provided huge support to Europe from 1948 to 1952, Europe still appeared in great danger. In 1947, President Harry S. Truman gained Congressional approval to provide military aid to nations under supposed threat of communist attack. This included military support of the Greeks, then engaged in a civil war against communist guerrillas.

[89] Gaddis, *The Cold War*; Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*; and Offner, *Another Such Victory*.

Congress allocated $300 million to Greece alone. This money included provisions for an advisory group and military materiel for Greece.[90]

Britain had been the Greek's benefactor in the aftermath of WWII, and until 1947, provided the Greek armed forces with materiel and support to fight the communists. However, depleted British resources made it impossible for them to continue doing so, as the increasing severity of the insurgency consumed military materiel and threatened the fragile, unrecovered nation. Greek forces, with inadequate training and ambivalent leadership, retreated to the major population centers, leaving the mountains and rural areas to the guerrillas. The communist troops launched large attacks against towns and key roads, and formed into battalion and brigade-sized units complete with mortars and artillery.[91] Aside from the political damage of a communist victory in Greece, the US worried that such a victory would also isolate Turkey and leave it vulnerable to Soviet intimidation or even invasion.

Military support to Greece went to combat operations, not preparation for future threats as would be the case in other European assistance missions. The Americans pushed for the Greeks to train effective, aggressive leaders at every level. US assistance in Greece had an immediate, demonstrable effect—US materiel and expertise helped the Greek National Army (GNA) to defeat the communist guerrillas. Further, the leader of

[90] Condit, *Joint Chiefs*, vol. 2, 10-17.

[91] Robert Frazier, *Anglo-American Relations with Greece: The Coming of the Cold War, 1942-1947* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991); Judith S. Jeffery, *Ambiguous Commitments and Uncertain Policies: The Truman Doctrine in Greece, 1947-1952* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2000); Yiannis P. Roubtais, *Tangled Webs: The US in Greece, 1947-1967* (New York: Pella Publishing Company, 1987); and Monteagle Stearns, *Entangled Allies: US Policy toward Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1992).

the MAAG for most of the war, General James A. Van Fleet, behaved as the ideal soldier-diplomat and enjoyed popularity amongst the Greeks. However, American support was only one part of the guerrillas' defeat, and the Greek armed forces retained a number of key problems by the end of the war.

From the beginning of the military assistance program, the Americans emphasized the need for aggressive action on the battlefield. General William G. Livesay took command of the advisory mission in June 1947, with the objective of monitoring US aid and training the Greeks in its use. He found problems greater than mere lack of training. Months of indecisive fighting exhausted and demoralized the army. They did not press home attacks and allowed guerrilla units to escape destruction. The armed forces lacked civilian support. Disorganized air operations achieved few effective combat sorties. Worst of all, wrote Livesay, army officers were "afraid to take the initiative" and lacked "offensive spirit." An "air of gloom" pervaded the entire military establishment. When asked by Greek defense ministers for his military opinion of the situation, Livesay suggested that they improve training, concentrate their forces to destroy the guerrillas, and sack bad officers.[92]

On 6 February, 1948, Army Major General James A. Van Fleet took command of the advisory mission. He acted as commander of the United States Army Group, American Mission to Greece and as Director of Joint United States Military Advisory Planning Group, Greece (JUSMAPG or JUSMAG), which together blended the missions

[92] "Livesay Diary, June 13-November 4, 1947," F Livesay Diary, Box 1, William G. Livesay Papers, USAHEC.

of a traditional MAAG with that of specific training and direct operational advising. Overall, Van Fleet continued the policy of Livesay—training up the Greeks, urging them to replace bad officers, and above all to continuously press the guerrillas. In his first week, he met with the Greek high command, US and British diplomatic figures, the GNA Inspector General, and the King and Queen, with whom Van Fleet developed a strong rapport. He spent his second week in the field, visiting the headquarters of three army corps, three division headquarters, and one Royal Hellenic Air Force (RHAF) base.[93]

Van Fleet continued at this pace for the rest of his nearly two years in Greece. He had considerable experience training and leading troops. In addition to seeing plentiful combat in both world wars, he spent much of the interwar period as a Reserve Officer Training Corps instructor and as an instructor at the Army Infantry School. His many letters conveyed his opinions of the Greek forces and the war. Writing to Lieutenant General Albert C. Wedemeyer in April 1948, he praised the typical Greek soldier and the high command, but criticized the brigade, battalion, and company grade officers, who needed "considerable improvement."[94] In a letter to Lieutenant General Courtney Hodges, Van Fleet described the hard fighting in the mountains and noted the army's lack of aggressiveness and inability to overwhelm guerrilla defenses in a timely manner. The Greeks relied too much on firepower. Van Fleet believed the GNA only

[93] General James A. Van Fleet (hereafter Van Fleet), F Commanding General's Journal, 5 Jan 1948 to 6 Apr 1948, Box 49, James A. Van Fleet Papers (hereafter Van Fleet Papers), George C. Marshall Library, Lexington, VA (hereafter Marshall Library).

[94] Van Fleet to Lt. General Alfred C. Wedemeyer and the JCS, 3 Mar 1948 F 52/19, Box 52, Van Fleet Papers, Marshall Library.

needed light infantry weapons to accomplish most of its battlefield objectives, but that would require "good infantry and good small unit leadership," which they lacked.[95] Van Fleet and his MAAG, advising down to the brigade and sometimes battalion level, worked constantly with the Greeks, encouraging aggressive action. The general often lived on or near the front, riding a mule alongside mountain troops or conducting dusty road marches in the height of summer.[96]

Van Fleet also advised at the highest levels. In early 1948, while still settling in to his new position, he worked as operational advisor to the Greek Commander and Chief of Staff, General Dimitrios Yiadjis. They visited the front together in March, Van Fleet hoping to improve the Greek general's confidence. He later successfully campaigned to keep Yiadjis in his position, feeling that his removal—urged by some Greek commanders—was too soon, and that stability in the command structure was best.[97] This illustrated Van Fleet's strong influence on Greek leadership and decision making.

Though Van Fleet wanted "to stick to my own knitting—the operations," he committed considerable time to the diplomatic side of his mission. "This is certainly a war that has to be fought with a great deal of protocol," he wrote to General Wedemeyer, then on the Joint Chiefs of Staff. "My time is taken up many times over with meetings

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[95] Van Fleet to General Courtney H. Hodges, 6 Aug 1948, F 49/30, Box 49, Van Fleet Papers, Marshall Library.

[96] Van Fleet, "Commanding General's Journal, 26 June 1948-9 September 1948," F 49/3, Box 49, Van Fleet Papers, Marshall Library.

[97] Van Fleet to Wedemeyer.

and conferences that go on incessantly."[98] Luncheons, meetings, and briefings with Greek ministers and other officials filled his schedule. Though he may have preferred the military side of his job, he appears to have conducted diplomacy with aplomb. He spoke on Greek radio, met with reporters, and regularly held court with the King of Greece. In letters to Army colleagues, the general remarked that there was "enough work here to keep half a dozen directors busy twenty four hours a day," but found the effort "extremely interesting and quite made to order for me."[99]

Van Fleet also enjoyed popularity with some of the Greek population. "Ban Flit," as they often pronounced his name, attended patriotic and religious events, visited hospitals and orphanages, and engaged the population more like a philanthropic celebrity than a general from a foreign power. [100] He used exaggerated, romantic language in his public speeches and the letters he shared with Greek officials and civilians. He made constant reference to Greece's ancient heritage as a defender of Western civilization, its bravery and suffering during World War II, and the hard work its army and people performed to modernize their nation and defeat the communist guerrillas. Van Fleet never referred to the conflict as a civil war. In a Radio Athens broadcast, he called it "Greeks against Communists."[101]

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[98] *Ibid.*

[99] Van Fleet to Colonel Sherman L. Kiser, 1 May 1948, and Van Fleet to Lt. Col. John B. Crowley, 19 Apr 1948, F 49/23, Box 49, Van Fleet Papers, Marshall Library.

[100] Lt. Col. Edward T. McConnell to Family, 2 Sep 1948, F 52/5, Box 52, Van Fleet Papers, Marshall Library. McConnell was Van Fleet's son-in-law and served on the General's staff in Greece.

[101] Van Fleet, "Remarks of General James A. Van Fleet recorded at Radio Athens for Mutual Broadcasting System of America," 5 Feb 1949, F 52/6, Box 52, Van Fleet Papers, Marshall Library.

Some Greeks saw Van Fleet as a savior as a man whose position and fondness for the Greek people might help them in times of need. In 1948, a wife wrote to Van Fleet for help getting her conscripted husband back home, to help take care of the family.[102] Other families hoped for a higher pension for their son, killed in battle with the communists, or for transfers so that a son could serve closer to home.[103] Van Fleet responded to these letters by reminding their writers he had no authority to make specific decisions for the military, but that he would forward the letters to the relevant GNA departments.

Some Greeks even sought Van Fleet's help in immigrating to the United States, writing passionate letters to get family members cleared for travel. Van Fleet usually responded in the same way to these letters as he did to those about the Greek military, citing his lack of authority on the matter, but he vouched for some who had connection to his office. He wrote to the American Consul General on behalf of a civilian named Liskos, asking the embassy to consider his case "under some exceptional circumstances such as compassionate reasons or other just cause which will give him a priority for entry into the United States".[104] Greeks showed their fondness through gifts. Van Fleet received a vase from a woman, and wrote a thank you note in classic "Ban Flit" prose:

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[102] Elpis A. Theodossiou to Van Fleet, 9 Jun 1948, F 49/26, Box 49, Van Fleet Papers, Marshall Library.

[103] Throughout, 7 Apr 1948-17 Apr 1948, F 49/21, Box 52, Van Fleet Papers, Marshall Library.

[104] Van Fleet to Consul General, American Embassy, Salonika, Greece, F 50/18, Box 50, Van Fleet Papers, Marshall Library.

""The vase is exquisite—beautiful—marvelous. I treasure it very, very much because it is Greek . . . I love to admire the beautiful shape. It is restful and peaceful to look at."[105]

The guerrillas made reference to Van Fleet in their own propaganda broadcasts. In the fall of 1949, as the war waned, a radio broadcast by the communists referred to Van Fleet as the "super-general" and reported that he dealt with communist prisoners held by the GNA. "He personally interrogates them, and gives the necessary 'unwritten' orders to the monarchofascist 'lap dogs' . . . to send the prisoners either to the reformatory schools or to the firing squads."[106]

While Van Fleet advised at the highest levels, lower ranking Americans worked to improve the Greek National Army and Royal Hellenic Air Force (RHAF). In the army, advisors plucked an infantry platoon from each Greek division, called "demonstration platoons," and trained it intensively for a month, before sending it back to become the core of a training mission in its division. This began improving the tactical abilities of the GNA, creating the "good infantry" Van Fleet hoped for in his 1948 letter to General Hodges. At the operational and strategic level, advisors pushed for constant attacks against guerrilla bases. Van Fleet also used his influence on the Greek high command, suggesting the removal of reluctant or incompetent Greek

[105] Van Fleet to Mrs. Mantzavinos, F 49/26, Box 49, Van Fleet Papers, Marshall Library.

[106] "Bandit Radio Report, Morning Broadcast," 11 Oct, 1949, F 57/5, Box 57, Van Fleet Papers, Marshall Library.

officers. Due in part to these processes, over 1948 and 1949 the GNA grew into a more effective force for destroying the guerrillas.[107]

The fight of the 518th Battalion provided a notable example of the GNA's improvement. In August 1949, the unit held the town of Tsouka, which protected the flank of their parent division. The guerrillas, hoping to outflank the division, attacked Tsouka with considerable forces and pounded the 518th with infantry assaults and mortars. While the battalion held out, the rest of their division continued its own attack, despite having guerrilla forces threatening its rear area. The 518th fought without requesting artillery support—the battalion's commander, Lieutenant Colonel Krista, knew his division needed the artillery was for their main attack. Only a year earlier, Greek troops in a similar position would not even attack lightly armed communist infantry without artillery support.[108]

While the GNA improved, the Americans also worked with the Royal Hellenic Air Force. The advisors' first assessments of the RHAF were gloomy at best. The RHAF's problems "begin and end with personnel and personalities," claimed a summary report from 1948. The undereducated Greek population produced few with the technical skills necessary to support an air force. Political instability hurt indoctrination and motivation. Tensions between politically liberal career RHAF officers and conservative reservists harmed unit cohesion and training. More air force personnel were lost to

[107] William D. Harris, "Instilling Aggressiveness: US Advisors and Greek Combat Leadership in the Greek Civil War, 1947-1949," (master's thesis, US Army Command and General Staff College [hereafter CGSC], 2012), 127-134.

[108] "JUSMAGG History, 25 March 1949 to 30 June 1950," MAAG-Greece, Box 146, E 155, RG 334 NARA.

politically motivated dismissals than to guerrilla anti-aircraft fire. Short enlistments meant a constant and heavy training load. Low pay, shoddy housing, and unappetizing food further hurt morale. Senior officers lacked organizational and management ability, including the "common sense rules of attaining efficient group activity through management and leadership." All of this resulted in weak tactical performance, especially in the realm of close air support, the RHAF's primary role in the war against the communist forces. Though the American advisors believed they could change individual RHAF officers, who were "definitely friendly and receptive to suggestions," the RHAF seemed too flawed an institution to fix in the short term.[109]

The advisors used a variety of approaches to improve the RHAF. Most important was the training of personnel at United Kingdom and US schools. By the end of 1949, hundreds of pilots, ground crews, and cadets graduated from these programs and returned to the RHAF to serve as instructors. [110] Some of courses were lengthy, including a ten week warrant officer course in Colorado and six month enlisted course in Texas.[111] American personnel also formed special training units in Greece to direct instruction on US-issue dive bombers. [112]

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[109] "Reports—USAF 1948, " F 319.1, MAAG-Greece, Box 221, E 161 RG 334, NARA.

[110] "JUSMAPG: Brief History, 1 Jan 1948 to 31 Dec 1949," 28 Feb 1950, MAAG-Greece, Box 146, E 155, RG 334, NARA.

[111] "Invitational Orders, 1948, '49, '50," F 300.4, MAAG-Greece, Box 219, E 161, RG 334, NARA.

[112] "JUSMAPG: Brief History, 1 Jan 1948 to 31 Dec 1949," 28 Feb 1950, MAAG-Greece, Box 146, 155, RG 334, NARA.

These steps helped drive considerable RHAF improvement in 1949 and 1950. In several major battles in 1949, the RHAF contributed to significant guerilla defeats. During a battle around Florina in February and March, the air force successfully massed aircraft from several distant bases. Despite inclement weather, they flew 131 offensive sorties, dropped twenty seven tons of bombs, and fired 170 rockets. After helping to defeat the guerrilla attack, the Greeks shifted to bombing guerrilla reserves. Air strikes inflicted heavy losses.[113] At the major government victory in the Vitsi/Grammos area in August, the RHAF flew 132 sorties per day, a record. During the same period in the previous year, they only managed 52.[114] Indeed, the RHAF achieved vastly more sorties overall, improving from 1,825 sorties from December 1947-May 1948 to 4,333 sorties in December 1948-May 1949.[115]

On the surface, the mission to Greece had considerable success. Invigorated Greek army forces pressed the guerrillas, who lost their safe havens in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, and the communist forces collapsed by 1950. It also provided the Americans with experience in facing communist insurgencies. General Van Fleet clearly learned several key aspects of guerrilla warfare. He observed that guerrillas needed international support—in the case of Greece, bases in Albania and Yugoslavia. Guerrillas needed civilian informants for intelligence; if civilians could be turned, the guerrillas would lose

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[113] Colonel S. B. Knowles, Jr., "Florina Operation, Feb-Mar 1949", 9 Mar 1949, F 373.2, MAAG-Greece, Box 228, E 161, RG 334, NARA.

[114] "Aerial Flights, 1948-50, US Air Force Section, Greece, Joint US Military Aid Group" 10 Jun 1950, F 373.5, MAAG-Greece, Box 228, E 161, RG 334, NARA.

[115] "Highlight Notes," F 314.7, MAAG-Greece, Box 220, E 161, RG 334, NARA..

their advantages in intelligence gathering. Van Fleet argued that advising and assistance worked well, with American (and British) expertise and supplies supporting Greek military muscle. The guerrillas' advantages—constant harassment, discipline, leadership, surprise, night attack, and intelligence gathering—were all successfully dismantled once the Greek National Army became an effective force and started applying constant pressure against the guerrillas. Though Van believed that the "science of warfare, like all phases of social organization, is dynamic," and that there were too many variables for one lesson to apply perfectly elsewhere, the lessons of the Greek war were nevertheless useful to future American endeavors.[116]

However, the Greek war ultimately proved a poor model for the US. The Greek communists made a critical mistake in the late 1940s: they sought open battle against the Greek National Army, launching full scale assaults against towns and defending hilltops and mountainsides throughout the country. The US did not actually learn much about fighting against an insurgency embedded in the population. The GNA had not fought a classic counter-insurgency, but rather a series of fast-moving actions and small, set-piece battles. They had not occupied towns for long periods of time, negotiated with local politicians, or even really dealt with the socio-economic problems that had allowed the communists to flourish in the first place.

Further, General Van Fleet and others emphasized the improvements to the GNA and their own successes in training and advising but mostly ignored the critical loss of communist safe havens, when Yugoslavia closed its border. With nowhere left to

[116] Ed Clark to Van Fleet, F 32/46, Box 32, Van Fleet Papers, Marshall Library.

regroup and rearm, the guerrillas were easy pickings. In hindsight, the Greek war was an easy test.

Furthermore, the success of advice and aid in Greece was deceptive. Not all the improvements in the Greek military were permanent or even completed. For example, the RHAF's tactical improvements in 1949 concealed continuing problems with how the Greeks managed their logistics. They were short on trained maintenance crews and had not created any career incentive for officers to study logistics. There was also no delegation of authority and a lack of initiative among junior officers.[117] The crisis atmosphere of 1947 and 1948, with the GNA on their heels and guerrilla forces holding significant portions of Greece, drove the MAAG to focus on tactical training and operational advice. These made the armed forces better at fighting, but were conducted in lieu of logistical and organizational reform. This left the GNA and RHAF with antiquated logistics and largely unable to sustain itself without US aid. It also did little to "Americanize" their armed forces, which remained closely connected with Greek politics.

THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION AND MILITARY AID TO WESTERN EUROPE

While civil war raged in Greece, the air of emergency in the rest of Europe grew throughout 1947-1949. In this tense climate, several nations of Western Europe sought

[117] "Aerial Flights," 10 Jun 1950.

collective defense as security against potential Soviet attack. The Western European Union formed in 1948, led by France and Britain. The WEU hoped for stronger American commitment to the continent's security, in the form of both US forces stationed in Europe and American military assistance. In April 1949, the United States joined Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, and the United Kingdom in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a peacetime military alliance committed to collective defense of the west.

The US made several commitments to the defense of Europe, including the creation of a field army in Germany. European Command (EUCOM), the inheritor of postwar occupation duties, was initially an unimpressive force, mostly police and light armored cavalry of the US Constabulary. It included a single combat division. With the establishment of NATO in 1949, US strategy dictated holding a line somewhere in Western Europe—preferably along the Rhine, more likely along the Meuse, and possibly as far west as the Pyrenees—while American bombers based in the UK and Italy pounded Soviet targets. The Soviet detonation of an atomic weapon in 1949, and the start of the Korean War in June 1950, alarmed President Truman and the American military leadership. They began programs to improve the defenses of Western Europe, which they believed was the real Soviet objective. EUCOM activated the 7th Army and by 1952 the force grew to four Army divisions, heavy with armor, artillery, and over 252,000 troops.[118]

[118] Carter, *Forging the Shield*, 7-25.

Though 7th Army eventually grew into an impressive force, no sustainable number of American divisions and air wings could successfully defend Europe alone. In 1952, the Soviet armies and their allies numbered 6.5 million troops. Most dangerous of all was the Group of Occupation Forces in Germany, a tank-heavy battle array of twenty two Soviet divisions. This force could triple in size within a few weeks of mobilization.[119]

American planners and NATO leaders hoped that military aid could bridge this gap in forces by increasing the size and modernity of Western European armed forces, especially with deliveries of tanks, heavy artillery, and jets. The most important aspect of military assistance to Europe, in the minds of US policy makers, was its benefit to European morale. The US needed to prove its commitment to Western Europe after WWII. For the first year of NATO, the US committed over $1 billion in military aid. For the rest of the decade, arms for Europe barely dropped below $1 billion a year, and regularly soared above that mark.[120]

The Americans placed most of their hopes for European defense in the early 1950s on France. In 1950, the French armed forces consisted of only six divisions and 300 aircraft. A series of NATO conferences ultimately agreed upon a large French ground force of 29 divisions and an air force of 2,000 planes. In the first three years of

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[119] *Ibid.*

[120] Poole, *Joint Chiefs*, vol. 4, 93. Histories of US involvement with NATO include Vojtech Mastny, "The New History of Cold War Alliances," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 4 (2002): 55-84, Ennio di Nolfo, ed.,*The Atlantic Pact Forty Years Later: A Historical Reappraisal* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1991); and Lawrence Kaplan, *The Long Entanglement: NATO's First Fifty Years* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999).

assistance to Europe, the US spent nearly $2 billion on the French armed forces.[121] Most of this money went toward the army.

Though the French did not develop their forces nearly as quickly as the Americans hoped, eventually driving the US to deploy more forces to Europe and seek unilateral armament of West Germany, the French armed forces were high quality and could quickly take advantage of US aid and training assistance. The French Army was generally superior to other European forces, in terms of both combat potential and logistics, and the American advisors reported positively on their units. The 29th Infantry Division had "an aggressive energetic attitude in their approach to problems of training and the maintenance of equipment."[122] The 28th Mountain- and the 4th Infantry Division both maintained excellent standards of repair on their equipment, encouraging because the 4th was an "M-Day" unit, meaning it was to ready to fight on the first day of mobilization.[123] Support units also did well, with functioning ammunition depots at several locations.[124]

French military schools were probably the best in Europe, with an officer school at St Cyr and numerous other specialty courses. Army Captain Michael Hogan visited

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[121] Poole, *Joint Chiefs*, vol. 4, 107, 151, and 169.

[122] Lieutenant Colonel Grat B. Harkins, "Report of Visit to Elements of the 29th Infantry Division," 31 Dec 1954, F 333, MAAG-France, Box 30, E MLR-115, RG 334, NARA.

[123] Lieutenant Colonel Jack M. Brown, "Report of Visit to Elements of the 27th Mountain Infantry Division," 29 Nov 1954, and Lieutenant Colonel Grant B. Hankins, "Report of Visit to Elements of the 4th Infantry Division," 29 Oct 1954, MAAG-France, Box 30, E MLR-115, RG 334, NARA.

[124] Captain Lloyd Deppensmith, "Visit to French Ammunition (Ord) Depot at Thouars, France," 9 Nov 1954, and "Visit to French Ammunition (Ord) Depot at Chemilly, France," 9 Nov 1954, MAAG-France, Box 30, E MLR-115, RG 334, NARA.

three French training centers in the summer of 1954: the Airborne School, the Parachute Maintenance Depot, and the Combat Training Center. He found excellent facilities and instructors at all three institutions. At the Airborne School, "The student is not coddled in any way. . . . Emphasis is placed on instructing the good men and not pushing the weaklings."[125] MAAG France even led an effort to create an official liaison between the French army and the US Army Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia. Major General T. E. de Shazo, the advisory group's commander, noted the value of such an exchange, for both sharing tactical concepts and creating connections between the two armed forces. General James M Gavin, then Army Assistant Chief of Staff, approved the measure later that year.[126]

The efficient and aggressive French Army displayed some of the most advanced abilities observed by MAAG personnel. In March 1954, Colonel Holman D. Hoover visited the French 21st Infantry Division in Algeria, where it participated in a large war game. 30,000 troops, 300 tanks, and 2,500 wheeled vehicles worked with naval forces. The training featured an amphibious assault and simulated atomic weapons. Though the defending "blue" force botched its use of atomics, inflicting two devastating instances of simulated friendly fire, Hoover was impressed by French technical and tactical skill. The attacking "red" force aggressively established its bridgehead and moved inland.

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[125] Captain Michael Hogan, "Visit to French Army Units," 19 Jul 1954, F 30, MAAG-France, Box 30, Entry MLR-115, RG 334, NARA.

[126] Major General T. E. de Shazo, "Assignment of French Liaison Officer to Fort Benning, Georgia", 26 Oct 1954, and Major General James M. Gavin, "Assignment of French Liaison Officer to Fort Benning, Georgia," 9 Dec 1954, MAAG-France, Box 30, E MLR 115, RG 334 NARA.

French soldiers and officers took the exercise very seriously, displaying their training and effective field maintenance.[127]

Though US strategists hoped that France would provide the bulk of Europe's forces, they also spent considerable resources arming and training the smaller countries of Northwest Europe. From Fiscal Year 1950 through 1953, the US spent over $1 billion on military aid to Belgium, Luxembourg, Denmark, and the Netherlands.[128] Money to the "Benelux" countries and Denmark paid for tanks, trucks, artillery, small arms, jets, naval vessels, facilities, and training. The missions to Denmark and the Netherlands were typical of the early advisory experience with NATO countries: the Americans worked to modernize the host armed forces through the injection of US equipment, weaponry, logistical management, and training methods. The two countries presented similar obstacles to the advisory effort. Both suffered serious damage during World War II. Their armed forces, dismantled by the Germans, were rebuilt in the British image. Neither country participated in collective defense with great enthusiasm. Throughout the first half of the decade, they fell short of their force commitments. The MAAGs attempted to solve or at least alleviate these problems by encouraging realistic training, improvements in logistics, and continuous pressure on the commanders of the Danish and Dutch forces.

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[127] Colonel Holman D. Hoover, "Visit to Maneuvers of 21st Infantry Division, Algeria—Morocco," 19 Mar 1954, F 333, MAAG-France, Box 30, E MLR-115, RG 334, NARA.

[128] Poole, *Joint Chiefs*, vol. 4, 169. During the same time period, the US spent approximately $1.9 billion on France.

DENMARK

In the years immediately after World War II, Denmark was firmly in Britain's orbit. Britain liberated Denmark in May 1945. They were close trading partners, with a majority of Denmark's imports to and exports from Britain. The Danish armed forces were remodeled after the British system, and trained with British units and instructors. However, Danish leaders gradually shifted their alliance to the United States, who was economically and militarily far more powerful than Britain.[129] The Danes, along with Iceland and Norway, turned away from the traditional cooperation of the Scandinavian countries by joining US-led NATO.[130]

Denmark was a signatory to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and signed an assistance agreement with the United States on 27 January 1950.[131] The United States began providing military aid to the Danes as part of the general buildup of NATO and by 1953 Denmark received $153.6 million as part of the arrangement.[132] Aid came in the form of heavy weapons, tanks, jets, and general military equipment. It also included an advisory group. Several aspects of the mission made it difficult for the

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[129] Rasmus Mariager, "'British leadership is experienced, cool-headed, and predictable': Anglo-Danish Relations and the United States from the end of the Second World War to the Cold War," *Scandanavian Journal of History* 37 (2012): 246-260.

[130] Thorsten Borring Olesen, "Scandinavian Security Alignments 1948-1949 in the DBPO Mirror," *Scandanavian Journal of History* 37 (2012): 185-197.

[131] "Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement between the United States of America and Denmark," 27 Jan 1950, *Military Assistance Bilaterals*..

[132] Poole, *Joint Chiefs,* vol. 4, 169.

advisory group to achieve its objectives, but the mission achieved some notable successes by 1954.

For the first eighteen months of the assistance effort, aid deliveries fell seriously behind schedule. Air Force Brigadier General Ralph Snavely, MAAG Chief from 1950 to 1953, worried that Danish resolve to participate in European defense could deteriorate without faster aid deliveries. [133] Shortages also hampered the advisors themselves. For much of 1950, the advisory group was only about 60% of its authorized strength, with 38 personnel of all ranks. General Snavely reported a general lack of guidance from his superiors about his mission's objectives and felt burdened by administrative tasks.[134] These problems of late deliveries, including shortages of training manuals, prevented advisor-directed training of Danish forces in 1950, and slowed training throughout 1951.[135] The situation finally improved in late 1951.

The state of Denmark's armed forces also presented a problem. They had been dismantled by the German occupation and in terms of equipment and weaponry, General Snavely described the Danes as having an "empty cupboard" which they hoped US assistance could fill. [136] Danish troops possessed little tactical experience, a problem revealed during training maneuvers in 1950. In August, MAAG Army observers noted a

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[133] Snavely, "Report of Activities, MAAG-Denmark, February 1951," 9 Mar 1951, F MAAG Denmark Monthly Activities Report, 1951 (Jan thru May), MAAG-Denmark, Box 16, E 95, RG 334, NARA.

[134] Snavely, "Report of Activities, MAAG-Denmark, May 1950."

[135] Snavely, "Report of Activities, MAAG-Denmark, December 1950," 10 Jan 1951, Military Assistance Advisory Group, Denmark, F 319.1-2, Reports, MAAG Denmark, Box 16, E 95, RG 334, NARA.

[136] *Ibid*.

"lack of realism" in daylight movements: Danish troops stayed in the open and massed their vehicles bumper-to-bumper, leaving them vulnerable to enemy air or artillery attack.[137] A year later, the situation barely improved. The army's slow training and wide distribution across the country precluded, as Snavely reported, "the possibility of the Danish Army offering any serious prolonged resistance to invasion by an aggressor."[138] The Royal Danish Air Force (RDAF) lacked technically trained maintenance personnel, which slowed maintenance of aircraft and hampered airbase management. To rectify the problem, the MAAG conducted training missions in country and arranged for RDAF servicemen to attend air force schools in the continental US.[139]

MAAG-Denmark worried about the Danes' willingness to fight. Throughout 1950-1953, Snavely reported on the Danes' reluctance to contribute substantially to NATO. The Danes' short, twelve month enlistments, low military pay, communist agitation in the country's cities, and the government's refusal to allow NATO use of Danish airfields during peacetime created a "period of inertia" that Snavely worried would prevent long-term improvement to the armed forces and impede European defense. The Danes also seemed unenthused about the prospect of military assistance and their participation in NATO. In May 1950, when aid shipments first arrived, the Danish press gave little coverage, there was no public fanfare, and the government

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[137] Snavely, "Report of Activities, MAAG-Denmark, August 1950," 7 Sep 1950, F 319.1-2, MAAG-Denmark, Box 16, E 95, RG 334, NARA.

[138] Snavely, "Report of Activities, MAAG-Denmark, February 1951."

[139] Snavely, "Report of Activities, MAAG-Denmark, December 1952," 10 Jan 1953, F MAAG Denmark Monthly Reports 1952, July thru December, MAAG-Denmark, Box 18, E 95, RG 334, NARA.

barely announced the event.[140] The MAAG also worried about Danish communists. In a September 1950 report, the Army Section believed it unwise to "send Danish personnel to US schools in the ZI [Continental United States] or EUCOM [European Command] about whom any question of ideological leanings has been raised even though [that] individual has been cleared." This concern may have also been leveled at German collaborators.[141]

Though Americans had concerns over ideologically questionable Danes, they did arrange for many to train at schools in the United States, beginning in the summer of 1950, and continued throughout the decade. As in other advisory missions, the personnel trained in the US became instructors in host nation schools and training centers upon their return. These "ZI-Trained" Danes were invaluable to the training effort. However, a 1951 report noted older officers, who had not traveled to the US, sometimes "hampered" the younger officers, by transferring them to other units or blocking attempted reforms and reorganizations.[142]

The advisors also encountered resistance from the Danish government and public. General Snavely considered it politically impossible for the Danes to extend their short, one year enlistment periods, as evidenced by the Parliament's several failed attempts to do so. Without longer enlistments, the Americans worried that the Danes

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[140] Snavely, "Report of Activities, MAAG-Denmark, May 1950."

[141] Snavely, "Report of Activities, MAAG-Denmark, Sept 1950," 10 Oct 1950, F 319.1-2, MAAG-Denmark, Box 16, E 95, RG 334, NARA. This researcher never encountered a similar comment in the reports of other MAAGs.

[142] Snavely, "Report of Activities, Feb 1951."

could barely field a single standing division.[143] Danish politicians and military leaders refused to deploy more of their troops in the Schleswig-Holstein region, where they could protect NATO's northern flank. MAAG was also frustrated by the slow decision making processes of the Danish armed forces.[144] Air Force Colonel Herschel Green, head of the Air Force section, worried that the Danes would not improve without facing an immediate reason to do so: "From past experience it has been found that little planning or action can be expected from the RDAF, and the Defense Ministry as well, prior to a problem becoming reality."[145]

Despite problems, the MAAG had some grounds for optimism. The increasing pace of aid deliveries in late 1951 improved military morale and public interest in military affairs. Beginning in 1951, the Danes started conversion to the American system of logistical management.[146] The government could be relied upon to keep the promises it made, in terms of mobilization and training goals.[147] Training of Danish personnel in the US and improved aid deliveries resulted in significant progress by December 1953. The mission's new chief, Air Force Brigadier General Thomas C. Darcy, claimed that the Danish Army had achieved "reasonable effectiveness" thanks to

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[143] *Ibid.*

[144] Snavely, "General Report of MAAG Activities, Military Assistance Advisory Group Denmark, January 1953," 10 Feb 1953, MAAG-Denmark, Box 20, E 95, RG 334, NARA.

[145] Snavely, "Report of Activities, Dec 1952."

[146] Snavely, "Report of Activities for the Month of May 1951," 8 Jun 1951, F MAAG Denmark Monthly Activities Report, 1951 (Jan thru May), MAAG-Denmark, Box 16, E 95, RG 334, NARA.

[147] Snavely, "Report of Activities, Feb 1951."

aid and training. The army also planned to open a number of specialty schools in 1955, including courses for infantry, tanks, artillery, and engineers. The Royal Danish Air Force became a modern air force, with six jet fighter squadrons. RDAF personnel improved their maintenance and logistical standards, according to Darcy, by observation and training with USAF units elsewhere in Europe.[148]

From 1950 to 1953, MAAG-Denmark reported mixed results. They had helped improve the army to "reasonable effectiveness" and overseen the development of a jet-fighter air force. However, foul-ups in delivery had slowed their progress, and, more importantly, the Danes still could only deploy limited forces into the field. They could not, in 1954, meaningfully contribute to NATO. Denmark was not the only scene of military aid disappointment in Europe. In the nearby Netherlands, NATO development also stalled.

THE NETHERLANDS

Following the devastation of World War II and the perceived threat of the Soviet Union, the Netherlands government and armed forces concluded that membership in NATO provided their best hope for security. The allure of military and economic assistance even convinced the Dutch to abandon fighting for their colonies in Indonesia. This costly military intervention following World War II, in open defiance of a United

[148] Brigadier General Thomas C. Darcy, "General Report of MAAG Activities, Military Assistance Advisory Grouip Denmark, December 1954," 31 Dec 1953, MAAG-Denmark, Box 20, E 95, RG 334, NARA.

Nations resolution, ultimately pushed the US to threaten aid suspension. The Dutch bowed to the pressure and left Indonesia that year.[149] In 1950, the Netherlands signed a military aid agreement with the United States.[150]

They initially pledged three divisions to the Western European Union and later NATO, one active and two in reserve. Dutch naval forces would be limited to minesweepers and patrol craft, which disappointed the navy but fit into overall NATO plans. The Dutch wanted their ground force commitments ready by the end of 1951, but a variety of problems, including budgetary limitations, twelve-month enlistments, and mismanagement by the military and government officials, prevented this. General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the newly-appointed NATO supreme commander, visited the Netherlands in January 1951 and was disappointed in the Dutch forces, reporting them as understrength and without any sense of urgency. The negative report by Eisenhower and increasing US pressure to send forces to Korea convinced the Dutch to increase their NATO commitment to five divisions.[151]

Relations with the US were strained after the war in Indonesia and the Dutch believed they could improve them by proving their value as a NATO ally. Government officials and military planners also hoped that by being a proactive member of the alliance, they could achieve a significant military objective: moving the defensive line of

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[149] Cornelis W. A. J. van Dijk, "The American Political Intervention in the Conflict in the Dutch East Indies, 1945-1949," (master's thesis, CGSC, 2009).

[150] "Agreement between the United States of America and the Netherlands," 27 Jan 1950, *Military Assistance Bilaterals*.

[151] Remco van Ingen, "The Dutch Perspective on NATO Development during the Korean War," (master's theisis, CGSC, 2012), 85-95.

NATO eastward from the Meuse-Rhine river line—where NATO commanders planned to fight—to the Rhine-Ijssel river line, which would protect more of the Netherlands. The Dutch army wanted an array of territorial troops, mainly assigned to defending the Netherlands itself, and a competently trained and well equipped force that could fight anywhere as part of NATO. Interestingly, the Dutch saw little use for their pool of experienced Indonesia veterans. The Netherlands General Staff believed their bush-fighting experience was inappropriate for open war against the Soviets.[152]

As the US increased its flow of aid to Europe in response to the Korean War, the Netherlands received over $293 million in FY 1952-1953 alone. MAAG Netherlands diligently trained the armed forces on American equipment, modern tactics, and US supply management techniques. Despite Holland's small size and limited armed forces, some Americans believed it could be successfully defended against a Soviet attack. Its unusual geography, with below-sea-level polder and many canals and bridges, made offensive mechanized operations difficult. During World War II even the Allies, with their massive logistical abilities and great mobility, were frustrated by soft ground and blown bridges. American planners believed that a competent Dutch military could do to the Soviets what the Germans did to the British and Canadians.[153]

The Americans faced difficulty helping to create a "competent" Dutch military. Rear Admiral Carey Jones, commander of MAAG-Netherlands, delivered a barrage of bad news in January and February 1952. Depot personnel, inadequately trained to

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[152] *Ibid*.

[153] A. E. Harris, "Regional Survey: The Netherlands and Belgium," (oral presentation, CGSC, 1946).

unpack heavy equipment, damaged a shipment of Sherman tanks. Dutch technicians tried tinkering with American radios, though "they have neither the proper tools nor 'know how' to accomplish this." The army's schools, except for its infantry course, were not up to US standards. The naval air arm, equipped with old British aircraft but no spare parts to maintain them, could not train at all until more US aircraft arrived. The Royal Netherlands Air Force (RNAF) only recently received new F-84 fighter jets, and required "continuous on-the-spot advice and assistance." The air force's antiquated logistical system could not handle the influx of new parts and aircraft, and two jet crashes crippled one Dutch pilot and killed another. Shoddy maintenance standards also plagued the ground forces, especially in the tank units.[154] Dutch infantry neglected their weapons and did not maintain their transport vehicles.[155]

Ammunition restrictions and high safety standards limited Dutch army training throughout 1952. The high command refused to release munitions from their war reserve, giving units little opportunity to become better acquainted with their new weapons.[156] The MAAG army section also complained that high safety standards reduced "the effectiveness of the training. In the case of overhead artillery firing, the minimum distance of the impact area from the troops is 1000 yards. The participants cannot even see the bursts." The Americans, who wanted "combat firing and battle

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[154] Rear Admiral J. Cary Jones, "Report of Activities, January 1952," 9 Feb1952, F Reports-JAN 52, MAAG-Netherlands, Box 41, E 209, RG 334, NARA.

[155] Jones, "Report of Activities, February 1952," 10 March 1952, F Reports—FEB 52, MAAG-Netherlands, Box 41, E 209, RG 334 NARA.

[156] Jones, "Report of Activities, January 1952," 9 Feb 1952.

indoctrination" for their allies, worried that too much safety in training was a bad thing.[157]

While the army trained, the RNAF underwent a difficult transition from propellers to jets. Pilot training, an inherently dangerous activity, cost the Dutch several pilots and numerous F-84s, with four pilots killed in 1952 out of only a few dozen in the program. Inexperience with jet aircraft was part of the problem, but even seasoned pilots could be lost. In February, a Dutch pilot trained on jet aircraft in the United States crashed and died while attempting acrobatics. Heavy aircraft attrition slowed training—of the 19 aircraft delivered by February, four were lost to accidents.[158] Not until December did F-84s arrive in significant numbers. The influx of new aircraft clogged the RNAF's underdeveloped logistical system and delayed final delivery of the jets to their units. During the unusually cold winter of that year, maintenance crews worked slowly in unheated hangars, whose worn-out furnaces awaited replacement.[159]

When not working, advisors' personal experiences and living conditions in the Netherlands were typical for Americans in Northwest Europe. Most MAAG personnel lived in the Hague, where they rented furnished apartments. Heating was expensive in high-ceilinged Dutch homes, which lacked weather stripping. Dependents went to Dutch schools, which the advisory group rated highly; children in grades 1-8 could also

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[157] Major General A.H. Noble, "Monthly Report of Activities, December 1952," 9 Jan 1953, F Reports Dec 1952, MAAG-Netherlands, Box 41, Entry 209, RG334, NARA. Noble was one of the very few Marine officers involved in MAAGs.

[158] Jones, "Report of Activities, February 1952."

[159] Noble, "Report of Activities, December 1952."

attend an American school in country.[160] They enjoyed amicable relationships with the Dutch. The Netherlands MAAG noted "when they invite you to 'drop in for a cup of coffee' they really mean it. . . [if you offer the same,] your new Dutch friends will probably show up some Sunday afternoon." The group's country guide, provided to new personnel upon arrival, suggested against trying to change the local culture. As is "common with the rest of Europe, Holland has its caste lines," the country guide warned, and Americans should not interfere with or fight such social mores. Because "we Americans enjoy more financial prestige and scientific and mechanical know-how than many European nations," personnel were not to flaunt their wealth or technical skills.[161] How US advisors, who trained allied forces on advanced equipment, were to not flaunt their technical skills is unclear.

Despite the slow start, the Dutch forces eventually adjusted to US training and equipment. MAAG complaints about vehicle and equipment maintenance dropped sharply as the year progressed. Dutch infantry units which had dirty weapons and broken down vehicles in 1952 were "surprisingly impressive" a year later, when MAAG advisors reviewed more Dutch units in May 1953. Tank units greatly improved their maintenance standards and sometimes trained alongside British Army of the Rhine

[160] "MAAG Netherlands, Station Report," 1962, USAHEC.

[161] "MAAG Netherlands, Station Report."

forces.[162] By the end of 1953, the aircraft units also improved and, by the American estimate, completed their conversion to the F-84.[163]

As in other advisory missions, the Americans credited their success with US material aid and the training of host nation instructors in US-run schools. Major material deliveries flowed into the Netherlands throughout 1952, including over 67,000 rifles and carbines, 104 guns and howitzers of 105mm caliber or greater, 160 81mm mortars, and nearly 2,500 new-model bazookas.[164] From 1950 to 1952, over 1,000 Dutch officers and technicians trained at schools in the US and in EUCOM's facilities in Germany. They served as instructors in Dutch units, passing on American training techniques.[165]

The armed forces of the Netherlands, like those in Denmark, certainly improved in the early 1950s. However, the Dutch and other European members of NATO did not develop forces large enough to fulfill the strategic requirements of earlier agreements, which frustrated US policy makers. The failure of the European Defense Community and slow development of Western European NATO forces in part drove the United States to unilaterally seek additional European allies, in West Germany and Spain. MAAGs would be busy in both countries.

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[162] Noble, "Monthly Report of Activities, May 1953," 9 Jun 1953, F Reports May 1953, MAAG-Netherlands, Box 42, E 209, RG 334, NARA.

[163] Noble, "Monthly Report of Activities, September 1953," 9 Oct 1953, F Reports Sep 1953, MAAG-Netherlands, Box 42, E 209, RG 334, NARA.

[164] Noble, "Report of Activities, December 1952."

[165] "Comments by United States Military Assistance Advisory Groups in Fifteen Countries Concerning Operations under the Mutual Defense Assistance Program," 1953, USAHEC.

SUPPORT OF SPAIN AND GERMANY

By 1954, European contributions to NATO fell well short of earlier agreements for a 90-division force. Instead, only about 63 divisions were ready, 40 of those "D+30" divisions unavailable at the beginning of a war. This force level remained mostly stagnant in 1954. As part of President Eisenhower's cost-saving "New Look," military assistance levels also fell in that year. The US placed increasing pressure on the European nations to pick up the slack in defense spending.[166]

American plans for the rearmament of West Germany caused conflict between the US and its NATO partners. Washington considered rearming the West Germans before the Korean War, but hoped that the nascent European Defense Community would include Germany. However the EDC collapsed in 1954, as the French, wary of a rearmed Germany, voted down the organization. The failure of the EDC combined with the generally slow mobilization of the NATO countries drove the US to rearm Germany through NATO and the US Army in Europe (USAREUR). The Americans and Germans envisioned a tank-heavy force of twelve divisions and several brigades. Such a force could theoretically allow forward defense in Germany and bridge the gap between NATO potential and reality.

Delays in coordinating aid and supplies pushed MAAG-Germany's activation to December 1955. The group worked alongside the GTAG, the Germany Training Assistance Group, which coordinated mobile training teams and on-the-job training

[166] Leighton, *Strategy, Money, and the New Look*, 557-558 and 560-562.

visits by German units with American units of EUCOM. The advisors were mostly drawn directly from the USAREUR.[167] Though the German troops took to tactical training very quickly, they did not take as easily to American standards and practices of field maintenance. The new German army benefited from the services of experienced veterans, but the officer class was essentially uninterested in technical minutia and did not acknowledge the importance of regular repair and inspection. The advisors spent most for their energy training the Germans in the logistical and managerial techniques used by the US Army.[168]

Over time, German officers overcame their own "indifference, or just plain stubbornness" and began to value equipment maintenance. In the area of technical work—mundane but vital to a mechanized army's effectiveness—US advising did very well with the Germans. Along with improved maintenance, the German armed forces seemed to take on a number of liberal characteristics. The German army had strict rules that protected the rights of soldiers, so much so that some advisors even worried that it was too democratic for its own good. US military personnel avoided discussions of "democratizing" the German army, considering those subjects either the purview of the State Department or German internal politics.[169]

Military assistance made the addition of West Germany to NATO possible, and the *Bundeswehr's* divisions strengthened the allies' limited order of battle. The West

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[167] Carter, *Forging the Shield,* 185-189.

[168] Birtle, *Rearming the Phoenix*, 251-85.

[169] Birtle, *Rearming the Phoenix*, 277-85.

Germans rearmed quickly in part because the assistance apparatus already existed in Europe.[170] The United States also took steps outside of NATO when it approached Spain in 1953.

SPAIN

US strategists saw military value in Spain, for airbases and as a staging area should France fall to Soviet attack. But to the rest of Europe, Spain was a pariah state with a fascist government and pro-German neutrality during the war. It was politically infeasible to make Spain part of NATO. Instead, US dealt directly with the country. After two years of tough negotiating, they reached an aid-for-bases agreement in May 1953. $465 million bought airbase and flyover rights; around $350 million of that aid was for military purposes, including training of Spanish forces by the US.[171]

The advisory aspect of the mission to Spain was quite similar to other operations in Europe. MAAG-Spain formally activated on 1 November, 1953. The advisors found a weak economy, including underdeveloped agriculture, little industry, and limited access to electricity. The armed forces fielded outdated weapons and equipment. Nevertheless, the advisors also found reason to be optimistic. National morale, noted a 1954 briefing, was "good primarily because the Spanish people are extremely proud." Though their equipment was old and of "extreme heterogeneity," Spanish troops, unlike

[170] Robert J. Watson, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1953-1954* , vol. 5 of *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff,1998), 313-15.

[171] Leighton, *Strategy, Money, and the New Look,* 568-569.

some other European forces, practiced regular maintenance. The army was "fanatically loyal" to the regime. The Americans also considered the country politically reliable. Spain prided itself, according to a US report, on being the first European country to resist communist attack during its 1930s civil war. In that conflict, the reported continued, Americans had actually been on the wrong side of history, supporting "the Abraham Lincoln Brigade which fought with the communist forces." This interpretation of recent Iberian history reflected the American anti-communist mood of the 1950s and shows that American support of authoritarian governments occurred in Europe as it did in Asia and Africa.[172]

MAAG-Spain had more limited objectives than some other missions in Europe. Because the Spanish practiced standards of equipment maintenance that the Americans respected, the advisors did not have to try and hammer home this routine as they did in missions elsewhere around the world. Furthermore, the aid-for-bases deal came with concessions from the US, which included specific goals for each branch of the Spanish armed forces.[173] They planned to motorize the army and modernize its anti-aircraft weaponry. The navy would develop its anti-submarine abilities and coastal defenses while the air force converted to jets. The Americans intended the program to make Spanish forces "effective in a defensive role."[174]

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[172] "Country Statement for Presentation of the FY 1955 Mutual Defense Assistance Program," F General Administrative Files, 1955, MAAG-Spain, Box 1, E 248, RG334, NARA.

[173] *Ibid*.

[174] "The Mutual Defense Assistance Program, Spain," 1 Sep 1954, F General Administrative Files, MAAG-Spain, Box 1, E 248, RG 334, NARA.

The Americans lauded the army's education system, especially after US material aid improved the various schools' facilities. A 1959 visit to the Infantry Academy in Toledo found well maintained facilities and course instruction. The school's instructors requested recoilless rifles, so that the trainees could practice anti-tank tactics. Colonel John D. Byrne, the visiting advisor, agreed with the instructors and passed the request up the chain. Byrne was equally impressed with the NCO Academy. Colonel Frank G. Forrest, a former instructor of mountain operations at Fort Greely, Alaska, visited the Spanish Mountain Warfare School in 1959. He suggested better winter rations and equipment but was pleased with the school overall.[175]

Training and assistance to the army quickly took effect. A 1958 visit to the Anti-aircraft Artillery Battalion-Balearic Islands found the unit well trained and professional.[176] The 13th Field Artillery Regiment's equipment and weapons were in "excellent condition," and the First Region Artillery Maintenance Park used US stock control procedures. Brigadier General Royal Reynolds, Jr. was "very favorably impressed" by the 61st Infantry Regiment's exercises and training.[177]

The Americans also hoped to modernize the Spanish Navy, primarily for use as an anti-submarine force. The US delivered several destroyers for use as training ships.

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[175] Colonel John D. Byrne, "Trip Report, 23 March 1959" and "Report of Visit to the Infantry Academy, Toledo", 3 Dec 1959, and Colonel Frank G. Forrest, "Spanish Army Mountain School," 30 Mar 1959, MAAG-Spain, Box 1, E 253, RG334, NARA.

[176] Lieutenant Colonel Maurice Palizza, "Trip Report," 14 Nov 1954, F 319.1/7, Visits to Spanish Military Installations, 1958, MAAG-Spain, Box 1, E 253, RG334, NARA.

[177] Lieutenant Colonel Lyndon P. Kramer, "Report of Visit to the 13th Field Artillery Regiment, 10 December 1959", 24 Dec 1959, and Brigadier General Royal Reynolds, Jr., "Resume of Visit to 61st Infantry Regiment, " 2 Jun 1959, F 319.1/7, MAAG-Spain, Box 1, E 253, RG334, NARA.

Maneuvers with these "loan destroyers" impressed the advisors, conducting mock submarine patrols and practicing radio communications.[178] By 1961, the Spanish Navy operated US destroyers, and coordinated with the Spanish Air Force to perform search and rescue missions at sea.[179]

MAAG's biggest project in Spain was modernizing the Spanish Air Force (SAF), fielded a polyglot mix of WWII-era planes, based on antiquated airfields. They lacked practical flight training and experience with larger air operations.[180] As in many other assistance missions outside of Europe, the group assisted the SAF in training on new jets and helped them develop their airfields and logistical system. They used the usual mix of methods: educational instruction, unit visits and inspections, and sent many Spanish personnel to training facilities elsewhere in Europe and in the US. The SAF received F-86 fighter jets and by the end of 1955 over 400 SAF ground personnel had received technical training in the US. These ground crews acted as training cadres in Spain.[181] Making Spanish airbases capable of handling jet traffic required much work, with long

[178] Major General S. J. Donovan,"Weekly Activities Report for MAAG-Spain for the Week Ending 24 November 1958," 28 Nov 1958, and "Navy Section, MAAG, Weeky Activity Report for week ending 14, 7 July 1958," F General Admin Files, 1958, MAAG-Spain, Box 1, E 248, RG334, NARA.

[179] Captain M.A. Zimmerman, "Navy Section, MAAG Weekly Activities Report for the week ending 19, 7 December 1961", 6 Dec 1961, and G.W. Scott, Jr., "Weekly Activities Report, Week of 26 June 1961, US Navy Shipbuilding Liaison Office, Madrid, Spain", 3 Jul 1961, MAAG Spain, F MGT 3-3 Weekly Activities Report (Navy), 1961, MAAG-Spain, Box 2, E 248, RG334, NARA.

[180] "The Mutual Defense Assistance Program, Spain."

[181] "Historical Data Report, MAAG-Spain" 25 Nov 1955, F Historical Data Report, 1955, MAAG-Spain, Box 1, E 248, RG334, NARA.

waits for steel planks to reinforce tarmacs.[182] One airbase lacked mechanical sweepers, necessary to keep runways clear of small debris that could endanger a jet's takeoff or landing. The MAAG borrowed one sweeper from a USAF base in France, and later acquired sweepers formally through the assistance program.[183]

Once Spain received jets and improved their airfields, training commenced on the new aircraft and the logistics required to support them. The Spanish quickly made "great strides" toward modernization and asked that more advisors be assigned to the SAF for training.[184] Training accidents were higher than the American norm, but MAAG-Spain considered the rate acceptable because of the SAF's overall inexperience with jets. The Americans and Spanish worked to translate training manuals and also trained the SAF on USAF logistical techniques.[185] In 1961, they commenced training with new Sidewinder missiles.[186] Spain quickly put its new air abilities to use, sending military aircraft on sea rescue missions, where they performed well.[187] Many US

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[182] "Minutes of the Joint USAF Air Section MAAG-SAF Meeting of 8 January 1960," F MGT 1-8 Joint Air Section/Spanish Meeting, 1959-1960, MAAG-Spain, Box 2, E 255, RG334, NARA.

[183] "Historical Data Report, MAAG-Spain."

[184] Major General A.W. Kissner, "Request for Changes to UMD and Training Mission, Air Force Section",
25 Mar 1957, , F Personnel Authorization Files, MAAG-Spain, Box 2, E 248, RG 334, NARA.

[185] "Semi-Annual History, MAAG Spain," F MAAG-Spain—Historical Data Report 1957, MAAG-Spain, Box 1, E 248, RG334, NARA.

[186] Major General Joseph D. Caldara, "Memorandum for the Ambassador: MAAG Spain Weekly Activities Report for Week Ending 5 July 1961", 6 Jul 1961, F MGT 3-1 Weekly Activities Reports (Command) 1961, MAAG-Spain, Box 2, E 248, RG334, NARA.

[187] Kissner, "MAAG Spain Weekly Activities Report for Period Ending 3 February 1958," 5 Feb 1958, F General Admin Files 1958, MAAG-Spain, Box 1, E 248, RG334, NARA.

planners argued that military aid could do more for a nation than just increase its military security, and the use of military aircraft for rescue and relief operations was one such benefit.

Spain made wide use of training facilities available elsewhere in Europe. Army troops personnel regularly trained in Germany and Italy.[188] Many also traveled to the US, for various training and observation assignments. Navy personnel visited the US in 1961, for example, undergoing sonar training at Key West, Florida; visiting civilian and naval shipyards across the country; and attending the Naval Command course at the Navy War College in Rhode Island.[189]

The American mission enjoyed publicity in Spain, with productive relations between MAAG and the Spanish officer corps and positive coverage from the press.[190] Regular meetings between American and Spanish officers occurred every month, in which they followed up on reports, organized inspection visits, developed procurement plans, and socialized. When disagreements arose, the Americans and Spanish easily came to terms. In a 1959 meeting between Major John Klinck and a Spanish major general, the latter complained about the age of equipment received by Spain. Klinck mollified him by explaining that the worldwide demands of the assistance program

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[188] "Historical Data Report, MAAG-Spain."

[189] Zimmerman, "Navy Section, MAAG Weekly Activities Report for the week ending 23 November 1961," 24 Nov 1961, and Commander J.W. Sedwick, "Navy Section, MAAG Weekly Activities Report for the week ending 19, 16 November 1961", 17 Nov 1961, and Zimmerman, "Navy Section, MAAG Weekly Activities Report for the week ending 19, 10 August 1961", 11 Aug 1961, F MGT-3 Weekly Activities Report (Navy) 1961, MAAG-Spain, Box 2, E 248, RG334, NARA.

[190] "Historical Data Report, MAAG-Spain."

meant that the US only had so much gear and weaponry to provide. Satisfied, the general moved on and the meeting continued without incident—an excellent example of diplomacy by a low-ranking American soldier.[191]

Contemporary sources credited much of the success in Spain to Air Force Major General August Kissner, who commanded the Joint US Military Group (which oversaw the Spanish bases) and the MAAG from 1952 to 1958. The ambassador to Spain described Kissner as "one of our greatest living soldier-statesmen," who "sees quickly, speaks softly, and acts quietly." He spoke Spanish and affected a careful, respectful relationship with the host government and military.[192] The *Stars and Stripes* called him an able "administrator-diplomat," who "'combined the qualities of a first rate diplomat with those of an able executive.'" Kissner brought previous diplomatic experience with him, having worked with the Portuguese during negotiations over bases in the Azores.[193] He had daily meetings, luncheons, and dinners with officials and was popular with the elite. He regularly played tennis with Spanish officers. A bachelor, flirtatious daughters of dignitaries pursued him at parties and formal events.[194] He was in many respects like

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[191] Major John Klinck, "Visit of Signal Officer, Army Section MAAG, with Chief Signal Officer, Spanish Army, 19 November 1959", 23 Nov 1959, F 319.1/7, Visits to Spanish Military Units, 1959, MAAG-Spain, Box 1, E 253, RG334.

[192] Corey Ford and James Perkins, "Our Key SAC Bases in Spain—and How We Got Them," *Reader's Digest*, Aug 1958, the A.W. Kissner Papers (hereafter Kissner Papers), AFHRA.

[193] Henry F. Schulte, "Kissner Leaves Spain Aid Post", *Stars and Stripes*, Mar 5 1958, Kissner Papers, AFHRA.

[194] Kissner's Diaries, 1953-1958, Kissner Papers, AFHRA.

Van Fleet, personally diplomatic and highly competent, though he lacked Van Fleet's fondness for purple prose.

Advisors and their families mostly lived in Madrid, where their comparatively high salaries allowed them to hire domestic help. To guide personnel and dependents through managing maids, cooks, and drivers, MAAG-Spain regularly updated "Standard Operating Procedure #18: Suggestions Concerning Domestic Employees." "They will respond warmly to your kindness," warned SOP #18, but, "like human beings all over the world, they will be quick to take advantage of laxness in discipline. . . . Americans who have had experience with Latin domestics know they must be treated with dignity and respect, but that nothing will ruin them more quickly than will familiarity." Americans were also not to "deliberately steal trained servants from each other or from our Spanish hosts by offering them higher salaries."[195]

MAAG-Spain issued lengthy guidelines on Spanish social mores. The guide encouraged officers to make "social calls" as a means of introduction: a serviceman's wife would telephone the wife of a Spanish official the American expected to work with and arranged visits over coffee or food. Americans going to parties, official or otherwise, were not to overstay their welcome: they should leave 30 minutes after coffee (if at lunch), or one hour after orange juice and whiskey (if at dinner). No one was to leave a party before the ranking official left. Americans were to make an effort to mingle with the Spanish and not "huddle" with other Americans. The guide warned

[195] "Standard Operating Procedure #18: Suggestions Concerning Domestic Employees," 1959, F Standard Operation Procedures #10-18, MAAG-Spain, Box 2, E 251, RG 334, NARA.

strongly against smoking during a meal, an American habit Europeans found distasteful. "Wait until the cigarettes are passed," the guide instructed. "They usually are at the end of a meal. If they are not, don't smoke."[196]

The advisory group also emphasized creating a good impression of Americans when driving. Major Glen R. Best, USAF released a bulletin to his personnel in 1957, reminding them that they should "observe Spanish traffic laws at all times. . . . exercise great care to avoid criticism of the handling of American official vehicles, and [be] courteous to pedestrians and other drivers." Drivers of American vehicles, American or locally hired, were to be cleanly shaven, with combed hair, shined shoes, and clean fingernails. In the case of a car accident, they were to render aid to any injured and remain at the scene. Staying with the vehicle was intended to both to protect US property and to show the locals that Americans did not "hit and run," regardless of whose fault the accident was.[197]

US policy makers and MAAG personnel considered the mission to Spain a success. For relatively small cost, the US gained use of important airbases and helped modernize the Spanish military. Strong leadership by General Kissner established good relations with the Spanish, which advisors and their Spanish counterparts maintained through regular and productive interaction. The mission to Spain reflected several aspects of US policy in the Cold War. Though Spain had few ties to the US, had limited

[196] "Guide on Social Customs," 14 Feb 1958, F MAAG-Spain Admin Memos, Unclassified Nos 1-31, MAAG-Spain, Box 2, E 251, RG 334, NARA.

[197] Major Glen R. Best, "Operation and Use of Official Motor Vehicles Assigned to MAAG-Spain," 21 Feb 1957, F MAAG Spain Admin Memos—Unclassified, Nos 16-20, MAAG-Spain, Box 2, E 253, RG 334, NARA.

trade value for American businesses, was controlled by an authoritarian government, and neither shared a border with a communist nation nor hosted a communist insurgency, the US nevertheless supported it with military assistance in order to gain base rights. This furthered American strategic goals in the Atlantic and Europe.

A DECADE OF MAAGS IN EUROPE

American Cold War strategy changed during the presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower. Eisenhower believed that strengthening the US economy would ensure its security, and decided nuclear armament was the most cost effective way to deter the Soviet Union from aggression in Europe and elsewhere. High-yield bombs, carried by heavy bombers based in the US and around the world, provided massive bombardment of the Soviet Union should a general war begin. Lower yield weapons, used by all services of the US armed forces, bolstered tactical abilities and, theoretically, made up for the outnumbered ground forces of NATO.

The New Look strategy, as well as congressional wariness of further aid spending, reduced funding for military assistance from its peak in 1952-1954. In Fiscal Year 1954, for example, the US spent $3.23 billion on assistance programs, mostly for European armed forces, but in FY 1955, Congress only appropriated $1.192 billion—a drop of around 60%.[198] The aid that did go to Europe was also spread over more countries, now including Spain and West Germany. An increasingly large slice of the

[198] Condit, *Joint Chiefs,* vol. 6, 239.

military assistance pie went to the Middle East and Asia, and by the end of the 1950s, more American military aid went to the "Third World" than to Europe. Nevertheless, the Americans remained committed. Just under a billion dollars a year continued flowing into the continent for the remainder of the decade, primarily to modernize allied air forces with new jets, radar, and missiles, but also to provide the NATO countries with nuclear capability by stationing tactical American weapons on the continent and providing some weapons to their allies.[199]

By the beginning of the 1960s, the Americans believed that military assistance to Europe had been at least partly successful. NATO's strength never reached its desired levels, in part because the European states were slow to mobilize and provide the manpower and additional funds to supplement US aid. Despite billions of dollars of assistance, the US 7th Army remained in Germany, even after the New Look provided the field forces with a nuclear punch. However, assistance had its victories, in large part due to the training efforts of the MAAGs and the contributions of the European forces. A communist rebellion had been defeated in Greece. NATO forces, including France and Germany but also the smaller members whose divisions cumulatively strengthened the alliance, developed greatly from their mostly moribund postwar state. Danish and Dutch pilots flew US-made jets, Europeans studied in American military schools, and the importance of maintenance and efficient logistics had been imparted to several of the NATO armed forces, if incompletely. Most significantly, assistance showed the NATO

[199] Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace*; Dockrill, *Eisenhower's New-Look*; and Ronald E. Powaski, *The Entangling Alliance: The United States and European Security, 1950-1993* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994).

powers the depth of American commitment to European security, and the advisors, along with the 7th Army and EUCOM, provided the human face of this commitment.

CHAPTER IV

THIRD WORLD ADVISORY MISSIONS

The United States centered its strategic attention on Europe, but policy makers also worried that the Soviet Union would encroach upon the "Third World," the mostly unindustrialized, underdeveloped nations of Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. The US used military assistance as a major component of its strategy to build up Third World nations against the perceived communist threat. Military assistance to the Third World never reached the overall spending seen in Europe, but it still represented a major commitment by the US. Assistance included advisors, who worked with host nations' armed forces to organize aid delivery, train troops, and develop military institutions. The advisors' work played an important role in US foreign policy and military strategy.

This chapter examines the role of American military advising and assistance in the Middle East and Asia. It shows that US advisors faced an uphill struggle with Third World armed forces that lacked established military institutions. The advisors tried to create allied forces capable of mechanized warfare as understood by the Americans, which those forces could not, in the short term, support without major US assistance. It also reveals that the desires of advisory groups, to create educated officer corps divorced from politics as per the American ideal, sometimes contradicted the objective of US foreign policy to support nations strategically and politically useful to the United States.

Overall, the advisors were restricted by conditions beyond their control, time and resources, and within their control, including their ideas of warfare and methods of training.

THE MIDDLE EAST

During the 1950s, United States policy makers believed the Middle East had considerable strategic value because of its oil reserves and its position between Asia and Europe. Increasing Soviet activity in the region made Washington more and more concerned of the Middle East turning away from the West. The US combatted Soviet encroachment by supporting pro-Western, anti-communist governments in the region. This began with President Harry S. Truman's support of Iran and Turkey and expanded dramatically during the Dwight D. Eisenhower administration. [200]

As historians have noted, American strategy in the Middle East encountered several major obstacles. The image of the US as the white supporter of the former colonial powers undermined the official American anti-colonial message. Washington's support of Israel was a constant source of friction. Perhaps most difficult of all was the region's fractious nature. Iran, Turkey, and Pakistan openly distrusted one another. The Arab states, like Egypt and Iraq, moved toward the growing movement of Arab

[200] Roby C. Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War: US Foreign Policy Under Eisenhower and Kennedy* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2007); Peter L. Hahn, *Crisis and Crossfire: the United States and the Middle East since 1945* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2005); Peter L. Hahn, and Mary Ann Heiss, eds., *Empire and Revolution: The United States and the Third World since 1945* (Colombus: The Ohio State University Press, 2001); and Salim Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism: The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

nationalism, which the United States worried would place them in the neutralist or Soviet camp. Furthermore, numerous Middle Eastern nations dealt with internal revolts. From the Americans' perspective, they were only a military coup or rural rebellion away from changing leadership and international affiliation. From 1949 to 1958, pro-western regimes in Syria, Egypt, and Iraq all fell to coups and uprisings, replaced by nationalistic governments which leaned toward the Soviet Union. Despite the creation of the Eisenhower Doctrine, to provide more aid to Middle Eastern governments facing potential internal strife, Arab nations continued their slide away from the US.

In the Middle East and Asia the US also directly encountered the complex forces of decolonization, which began during World War I and accelerated after World War II. The United States viewed these new nations with a mix of idealistic optimism—reflecting traditional American anti-colonial sentiment—and pragmatic geopolitics. Washington claimed they wanted these new nations to follow ideals of free enterprise and democratic government, and not succumb to Soviet influence. However, in many instances American political leaders acted as a conservative force in the developing world. They did not demand the immediate withdrawal of European empires, wanting Third World markets and resources to remain available to recovering European and Japanese economies. American covert action unseated leftist leaders and backed conservatives. US policies supported authoritarian, military-backed regimes out of fear that young democracies could too easily come under control of the communists. These new countries, however, were not passive recipients of foreign aid or puppets to great power rivalry. They manipulated great power interests, often playing their former

imperial overlords against the Soviets and the United States. They pursued their own political objectives, sometimes greatly at odds with US policy.[201]

For most of the 1950s, the US made these varied political and military objectives in the third world distinctly secondary to their objectives in Europe. The United States spent $10.19 billion on aid to Greece, Turkey, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia from 1950-1959, but spent $12.5 billion on to Western Europe alone.[202] For the first four years of the decade, over 79% of aid went to Europe.[203] Most support delivered outside of Europe occurred in the latter portion of the decade. By the end of the 1950s, as the Eisenhower administration reduced Truman's heavy spending and completed rearmament projects in the West, aid shifted to the Third World—in Fiscal Year 1959, for example, the US delivered $1.384 billion outside of Europe, and $927 million to Europe.[204] The number of MAAG personnel also conveyed the new US emphasis on the Third World. In 1958, there were 6,893 United States military personnel assigned to MAAGs all around the world. Only 614 were stationed in Europe: 19 were in Latin America, 669 were spread across Japan, Ethiopia, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Libya; and the

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[201] Dietmar Rothermund, *The Routledge Companion to Decolonization* (London: Routledge, 2006). For more on the United States, decolonization and the Cold War, see H.W. Brands, *Spectre of Neutralism: The United States and the Emergence of the Third World, 1947-1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989); Gabriel Kolko, *Confronting the Third World: United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1980* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988); and Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of our Times* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[202] *The President's Committee to Study the United States Military Assistance Program*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Office of the White House, 1959), 142.

[203] Robert J. Watson, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1953-1954,* vol. 1 of *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff* (Washington, DC: Office of Joint History, 1998), 202.

[204] Fairchild and Poole, *Joint Chiefs,* vol. 7, 73.

remainder were in Iran, Southeast Asia, and East Asia. In Europe, only West Germany still had a MAAG in the triple digits, with 185 advisors. The biggest missions were Vietnam (692), the Republic of China (1,641), and South Korea (1,656).[205]

This section examines four advisory missions in Africa and the Middle East: Turkey, Iran, Libya, and Ethiopia. Turkey controlled vital exits from the Black Sea and supported the "strategic flank" of Europe. In Iran, Washington primarily wanted to maintain a friendly, stable government. They supported the Iranians in the development of their internal security forces and conventional capabilities. The assistance mission to Libya lacked great strategic importance, but reflected American concerns about Arab nationalism and regional strife. The US operated in Ethiopia in exchange for base rights, and the MAAG mission there had the dubious distinction of being the least pleasant peace time advisory mission of the Cold War.

TURKEY

Before World War I, the United States had few interests in Turkey. The Great War replaced the Ottoman Empire with a nationalist, modernizing government founded by politically active soldiers. The US Senate did not recognize the new Turkey until 1927, by which time US-Turkish relations slowly evolved. Secondary diplomatic agents and private individuals increased contact between the two nations. The first Turkish ambassadors to the United States, popular with the American press, helped dispel the

[205] *The President's Committee*, vol. 2, 346.

"Terrible Turk" myth, which by the late 1930s had given way to the "New Turk," a hard-working and trustworthy nationalist. Improved interwar relations prepared the way for post-war cooperation the United States and Turkey. [206]

After WWII, Turkish leaders looked to the United States for support. A combination of Turkish politicking, Soviet aggression, and American strategic interests brought the nations together in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The United States grew worried of Soviet intentions toward Turkey, and officially backed the Turks when the Soviets demanded access to the Straits in 1946. Concerns over the Greek civil war also encouraged American involvement in the region. Turkey's geographic position shielded Middle Eastern oilfields. The nation also controlled the Black Sea exits, a vital strategic interest for the Soviet Union.[207] If a Soviet attack came, the Turks would likely have their hands full. The Americans estimated Soviet objectives as the straits between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea and the main Mediterranean ports. A simultaneous attack from east and west would put tremendous pressure on the Turkish ground forces.[208] As with many nations, Turkey also sought military assistance for its own purposes and objectives. The US wanted to support Turkey as part of the global struggle

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[206] Roger R. Trask, *The United States Response to Turkish Nationalism and Reform, 1914-1939 (*Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1971) and George S. Harris and Nur Bilge Criss, eds., *Studies in Atatürk's Turkey: The American Dimension*, (Leiden, NE: Brill, 2009).

[207] Melvyn P. Leffler, "Strategy, Diplomacy, and the Cold War: The United States, Turkey, and NATO, 1945-1952," *The Journal of American History* 71 (Mar., 1985): 807-825, and H. N. Howard, *Turkey, the Straits and US Policy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975).

[208] "Reconnaissance Report on Field Trip Number 3, Eastern Asiatic Turkey," 1 Jun 1951, Joint American Military Mission for Aid to Turkey (hereafter JAMMAT), Box 6, E 250, RG 334, NARA.

against communism, but the Turks desired improved security against all their neighbors—foremost the Soviets, but also Greece, the Arab nations, and Iran.[209]

As part of the Truman Doctrine, the US started military assistance to Turkey in 1947. It was a massive undertaking. Turkey had large numbers of troops, proven brave in previous wars, but they had old weapons, underdeveloped logistics and roads, and practiced obsolete tactics. The United States supplied the Turks with modern weaponry intended for mechanized battles, and the advisors and specialists to train the Turks on the new equipment and methods. The American aid operation in Turkey succeeded in that it partly modernized the military and strengthened ties between the two nations. But the mission frustrated the advisors, because the Turkish military's deep institutional problems could not be fixed in the short term.

The advisory group began its work in 1948, as the Joint American Military Mission for Aid to Turkey (JAMMAT). The mission grew to about 350 prsonnel by the end of the year, including army, navy, air force, and a road/highway development section. The group added an engineering section later. The mission's largest component was the Turkish-US Army Group (TUSAG).[210] As in other missions, JAMMAT personnel managed the delivery of incoming materiel and worked with the Turks to determine what equipment and weapons they wanted versus what the United States could provide. They assessed Turkish military abilities and facilities. Most significantly,

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[209] Süleyman Seydi, "Making a Cold War in the Near East: Turkey and the Origins of the Cold War, 1945–1947," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 17 (2006): 113-141.

[210] "Monthly Progress Report of Aid to Turkey Program—July 1948", 11 Aug 1948, JAMMAT, Box 13, E 251A, RG 334, NARA.

they trained troops in the use of American equipment and military techniques. Army missions ran the gamut, from preparing the ports for incoming materiel to training courses on US weapons like the 81mm mortar and 3-inch anti-tank gun.[211] The air force advisors directed development of airbases, logistics, and pilot training. The navy conducted mine warfare, submarine and surface training.[212]

The Americans found a panoply of problems in the Turkish armed forces. The General Staff excessively centralized authority, which slowed decision making and dissuaded personal initiative among the junior officers. Turkish officers had little professional training or education.[213] The reserve officer training system, one 1951 American report declared, was "merely a device to exempt sons of upper class families from ordinary soldier duties." The enlisted men were under-educated and lacked technical skills.[214] Short on critical specialists like technicians and mechanics, the army could not use more advanced gear, including new radios and range finders. The air force advisors examined Turkish airfields and found them "scarcely usable."[215] When the Americans arrived in 1948, they observed that Turkish Armed Forces had no concept of

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[211] "Monthly Progress Report on Aid to Turkey Program--February 1948," 17 Mar 1948, and "Monthly Progress Report on Aid to Turkey Program for April 1948", 17 May 1948, JAMMAT, Box 13, E 251A, RG 334, NARA

[212] "Monthly Progress Report on Aid to Turkey Program for April 1948."

[213] "Monthly Progress Report for September, 1948," 11 Oct 1948, JAMMAT, Box 14, E 251A, RG 334, NARA.

[214] "Report of Ad Hoc Committee on Turkish Infantry," 1951, F 353/INF—Inf School and Training (1951), and "Outline Country Statement for Presentation of the FY 1954 MDA Program," 1954, JAMMAT, Box 7, E 250, RG 334, NARA.

[215] "Monthly Progress Report for September, 1948."

the logistics needed to support a modern force.[216] Tuberculosis further degraded their armed forces, with 1% or more of some units infected with the "active" form of the disease, almost seven times the US rate.[217] Even language required modification—advisors dealing with radar and communications added around 300 technical words to Turkish.[218]

The Americans hoped to modernize the Turkish armed forces with training, education, and improved equipment. Training took the form of classroom instruction, Turkish personnel education in the US, and field exercises. In May 1948, the Army group started numerous courses, for radar operators, tank gunners, tank mechanics, and more, and began practice with US-made weapons.[219] The Turks selected some of their more exceptional officers for training in the United States. One of the first batches of these men returned to Turkey in July 1948 and became instructors themselves.[220] By December 1948, some 3,000 Turks had graduated from the US-directed facilities.[221] This rate increased as the years progressed. They were generally quite receptive to the

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[216] "Outline Country Statement for Presentation of the FY 1954 MDA Program."

[217] "Medical Reports,"17 Aug 1951, F 702, JAMMAT, Box 8, E 250, RG 334, NARA.

[218] "Progress Report for January 1949," 17 Feb 1949, JAMMAT, Box 16, E 251A, RG 334, NARA.

[219] "Monthly Progress Report of Aid to Turkey Program—May 1948," 12 Jun 1948, and "Monthly Progress Report of Aid to Turkey Program—April 1948," 17 May 1948, JAMMAT, Box 13, E 251A, RG 334, NARA.

[220] "Monthly Progress Report of Aid to Turkey Program—July 1948."

[221] "Monthly Progress Report of Aid to Turkey Program—December 1948," 13 Jan 1949, JAMMAT, Box 14, E 251A, RG 334, NARA.

training methods, reorganizing their infantry school to mirror the US school. The advisors took this as a sign of the confidence in American practices.[222]

The Turkish Motor School was a mundane but important aspect of the advisory mission. Driving was not a common civilian skill in 1940s Turkey, so the armed forces were desperately short of drivers. The US provided funding and training materials for the Motor School, and suggested in 1949 that it move to a new location, where better weather conditions allowed more training.[223] By the end of 1949, the availability of drivers had improved enough that the school shifted emphasis to training instructors only. This was indicated progress for the Turkish armed forces, as mechanized forces were impossible without enough drivers. As will be seen, however, the driving school ran into trouble later.

As training continued, US materiel flooded into Turkey. JAMMAT's army section spent its first weeks assessing ports and preparing the way for the military aid.[224] The Turks processed the incoming materiel more efficiently than the Americans expected. The Americans tripled the scheduled aid shipments from 10,000 metric tons per month to 30,000. The shipments included reams of manuals, training aids, and lesson plans, but the language barrier complicated their use.[225] Translating this wealth of

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[222] "Monthly Progress Report of Aid to Turkey Program—November 1949", 22 Dec 1949, JAMMAT, Box 16, E 251A, RG 334, NARA.

[223] "AMAT Monthly Progress Report August 1949," 13 Sep 1949, JAMMAT, Box 16, E 251A, RG 334, NARA.

[224] "Monthly Progress Report of Aid to Turkey Program—February 1948."

[225] "Monthly Progress Report on Aid to Turkey Program for April 1948."

information became a bottleneck in the training schedule. Even by 1949, TUSAG personnel called the translating section "swamped."[226] The Americans simultaneously urged that the Turks replace their "antiquated" record keeping with the "flexible American system of stock record cards."[227]

While the army trained for land warfare, advisors worked to modernize the Turkish Air Force (TAF). They began a six month program to strengthen runways and replace makeshift shacks with air-traffic control towers. While working on the airfields, shipments of US-made aircraft arrived, mainly P-47 fighters and C-47 transports, and pilot and ground crew training commenced.[228] They also introduced the Turks to the use of training films, which the USAF had found highly effective.[229] Training included courses on aircraft armament, ground vehicles, meteorology, and firefighting.[230] As early as July 1948, the TAF began large-unit training with its new American aircraft, successfully conducting an exercise involving both P-47 fighters and A-26 bombers. Batches of Turkish pilots traveled to West Germany where they flew with American fighter groups.[231] Logistically, the Turkish Air Force groaned under the weight of American equipment and new airfields. With twice as many aircraft as before and three

[226] "Progress Report for January 1949," 17 Feb 1949, JAMMAT, Box 16, E 251A, RG 334, NARA.

[227] "Progress Report for January 1949."

[228] "Monthly Progress Report on Aid to Turkey Program for April 1948."

[229] "Monthly Progress Report of Aid to Turkey Program—February 1948."

[230] "Monthly Progress Report of Aid to Turkey Program—May 1948," 12 Jun 1948, JAMMAT, Box 13, E 251A, RG 334, NARA.

[231] "Progress Report for December 1948."

times as many flight hours, their maintenance backlog quickly snarled.[232] However, with better training and more modern aircraft, the TAF's accident rate dropped almost by half, down from 3.3 accidents per 1000 flight hours in 1947, to 1.9 per 1000 in 1949.[233]

The navy group trained for submarines, minelaying/sweeping, and destroyers, which reflected the US objective of holding the Black Sea exits through the Bosporus and Dardanelles. Beginning in February 1948, they helped coordinate Turkish sailors' trips to the US for training at continental facilities.[234] As in the army and air force, the advisors developed school courses for almost all aspects of the Turkish navy. The Fleet Schools program, as it became known, included torpedo maintenance, minesweeping, electronics, gunnery, and navigation.[235]

The Americans emphasized submarine operations, delivering four boats to the Turkish Navy. The USN temporarily assigned 102 submarine crew to the mission, creating a Submarine Instruction Unit that rigorously taught the Turkish sailors for twenty two weeks. This created a well-prepared nucleus of submarine crews.[236] The trainers helped the Turks begin their own submarine school and acquired some fifty

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[232] "AMAT Monthly Progress Report August 1949" 13 Sep 1949, JAMMAT, Box 17, E 251A, RG 334, NARA.

[233] "Monthly Progress Report of Aid to Turkey Program—April 1950," 18 May 1950, JAMMAT, Box 16, E 251A, RG 334, NARA.

[234] "Monthly Progress Report of Aid to Turkey Program—February 1948."

[235] "Monthly Progress Report on Aid to Turkey Program for April 1948."

[236] "Progress Report for November 1948," Dec 1948, JAMMAT, Box 14, E 251A, RG 334, NARA.

training films, covering subjects as varied as Torpedo Control Spreads, Shallow Water Diving, and Sex Hygiene.[237] The Navy also conducted surface exercises, using two US destroyers delivered to Turkey in June 1949. The crew quickly trained on the new destroyers after a cadre of twelve officers trained in the US returned to Turkey.[238]

As early as mid-1949, the navy mission showed signs of success. The Turkish forces, with the help of their US advisors, developed effective training plans and followed them closely. The Americans suggested concentrating facilities in a few locations, instead of spreading the across the coast, and the Turks complied. This sped up their schedules and cut down on back-and-forth travel. The Fleet Schools greatly improved the Turkish Navy, because, wrote an advisor in a 1949 report, "the Navy can, in the long run, be no better than its trained personnel make it."[239]

Advising in Turkey was physically arduous and time consuming. In 1954, TUSAG attempted one visit to each major unit per month, and spent 60% of their time in the field. They focused their time on "M-Day" units, those intended to fight at or near the beginning of hostilities. Brigadier General Robert Aloe, an army advisor, noted in 1954 that the advisors managed their trips even in bad weather and on miserable roads. "On separate occasions some 9 or 10 team members had to hike distances of 10 to 15 miles to shelter because of blocked roads," he wrote, "and have to spend a day or so in small isolated villages waiting for roads to be cleared." The Americans drove long

[237] "Progress Report of Dec 1949," 21 Jan 1950, JAMMAT, Box 17, E 251A, RG 334, NARA.

[238] "Progress Report for May 1949," 14 Jun 1949, JAMMAT, Box 16, E 251A, RG 334, NARA.

[239] "Progress Report for May 1949."

distances to reach Turkish units, with an average round trip of 700-800 miles. They travelled in pairs of vehicles, in case one broke down, and started the trip on the weekend to make maximum use of the workweek. Easy desk work it was not.[240]

For American personnel and their families, living and working in Turkey came with challenges. JAMMAT provided incoming personnel with a country guide, which cautioned, "food is the problem close to the hearts of many Americans who live abroad. Obviously, it cannot be expected that an American housewife living in Turkey will shop, or cook, or feed her family in the same way she did in the United States." Turkish milk was not pasteurized, and the guide warned that "fresh milk must be boiled" to be safe. "Some Americans prefer to mix their own Klim," the station's country guide continued, referring to the dried milk substitute.[241]

Advisors and their dependents lived in rental units and hotels in the large cities of Ankara and Istanbul, relatively modern cities with electricity, phone service, and automobiles. An American dispensary operated in in Ankara, staffed by US doctors and nurses. Servicemen's families could send their children to an English-speaking school in Ankara (kindergarten through 12th grade), take college-level courses at the Robert College in Istanbul, and access more limited facilities in several other towns. JAMMAT personnel went to the NCO Club, played tennis at local courts, rode horses (the animals and riding gear provided for free by a cavalry regiment in Ankara), skied, or played

[240] "TUSAG Staff Conference," 23 Nov 1954, JAMMAT, F 337 Conferences, Box 81, E 255, RG 334, NARA.

[241] "General Information About Turkey, for personnel being assigned to the Joint Military Mission," 1 Mar 1954, JAMMAT, Box 5, E 250, RG 334, NARA.

golf. Those stationed near the Black Sea, the base of Greek colonies from antiquity, could visit Greco-Roman ruins. Some navy personnel, however, lived further afield, at Camp Lockwood, in the rural area of Golcuk. They lived in in Quonset huts, each family allotted half a hut. Servicemen were warned against bringing dependents to the isolated station, which, because of terrain and road conditions, was a five hour journey from Istanbul, only 60 miles away. [242]

By 1953, the aid program's major training and supply management task neared its end. The Turkish Army had, on average, 300,000 troops—but this number fluctuated wildly, as the rhythm of conscription shifted their strength every few months. The Turks could not support a force any larger. The advisors worried about what might happen in the case of war. In 1953, the Turks had four "M-Day" divisions, and eight more "M+15" divisions—a small force to face the Russian hordes that American planners imagined.[243]

The Turks needed to be well trained and ready to face a Soviet assault, but a JAMMAT report of large-scale maneuvers in January, 1952 had few positive things to say about Turkish progress. Despite nearly four years of training on logistics and maintenance, neither were "fully appreciated" by the Turks. "Each of the army maneuvers," the US report read, "barely scratched the surface on the tremendous supply problems which will face the Turk Ground Forces in war." The Turks also made

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[242] Ibid.

[243] Major General W. H. Arnold, "Study of Personnel Distribution within Turkish Ground Forces," 8 Jan 1954, JAMMAT, F 200 Personnel, Box 4, E 250, RG 334, NARA.

numerous tactical errors: they did not protect their defensive positions with obstacles or mines, neglected reconnaissance, and advanced through valleys rather than along ridges. Units in the field neglected sanitation and hygiene. One US observer noted that it took too long for the Turks to apply what Americans taught them.[244] Such trends continued. In 1954, TUSAG noted that smaller Turkish units, which trained together regularly, did well; battalions and above need more work to function properly.[245]

According to the Americans, the Turks' institutional problems were simply too deep for a few years of advising to fix. They had "no concept of maintenance and supply techniques necessary to support a modern force," bemoaned the writer of one report.[246] The army neglected staffing one of its most important schools, the Motor Transport School, leaving it short scores of personnel. This undid much of that school's success only a year earlier and introduced more bottlenecks into the Turkish logistical system. The advisors did manage to dissuade the Turks from sinking personnel and resources into a 2-year advanced college, arguing that they should focus on staff courses and other fundamentals before moving on to higher level institutions.[247] Their army often sent unqualified officers to school courses. Some students were so frequently

[244] "Monthly Progress Report US Mission for Aid to Turkey—January 1952," 4 Mar 1952, JAMMAT, Box 1, E 250, RG 334, NARA.

[245] "TUSAG Conference."

[246] "Outline Country Statement for Presentation of the FY 1954 MDA Program."

[247] "Monthly Progress Report of Aid to Turkey Program—April 1950."

tardy that their Turkish superiors had to take disciplinary measures.[248] Even by the end of the 1950s, the Turkish armed forces had a long way to go to become a modern, mechanized force. According to a former advisor, writing in 1959, the Turks still had problems meeting their objectives of border defense, with limited ability to deter Soviet aggression. "Self sustaining" Turkish forces remained elusive, with the nation still in need of significant US assistance.[249]

US advisors could only go so far to correct shortcomings. At a TUSAG conference in 1954, Brigadier General Aloe frankly spoke about the frustrations of advising, the attitude of American advisors, and the nature of American advisory and assistance missions abroad:

> I wish to urge again that we accept the fact that the Turks are a sovereign nation. We don't command. They have their own ways. We try to advise according to our tried-and-true methods. They can't always accept. Their laws, customs, and traditions interfere. We try to keep them on the path but if they deviate that's it. They make the rules. . . . .I mention this to show that once they make the decision and it is not too completely crazy, that's the ground rule.[250]

Despite shortcomings, US advising and equipment had a positive effect on the Turkish military. The advisors reinvigorated a previously stagnant school system. Turkish officers trained successfully at US schools and with American units in Germany. Large-scale maneuvers showed improvement in the armored brigades and on road

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[248] "Monthly Progress Report of Aid to Turkey Program—Feburary 1950," 3 Mar 1950, JAMMAT, Box 19, E 251A, RG 334, NARA.

[249] John D. Hickey, "Evaluation of Military Aid in the Middle East," 1959, AWSCP, USAHEC.

[250] "TUSAG Staff Conference."

marches.[251] Turkish infantry—the "most important service" according to the Americans—trained hard at the smaller unit level.[252] The brigades Turkey sent to fight in Korea fought well and earned the respect of the United Nations command.

This progress and improvement weighed against the continuing problems of the Turkish armed forces, similar to those in other developing countries: an officer corps resistant to change and lacking in professional education; difficulty in understanding the importance of logistics in modern warfare; and a general shortage of technically- and mechanically trained personnel. The advisors contributed to these problems by emphasizing and planning for the Turkish armed forces to train and equip themselves toward American-style, mechanized warfare.

IRAN

While JAMMAT trained in Turkey, the Americans also assisted development in Iran, which required forces capable of both internal security and limited external defense against the Soviet Union. US involvement in Iran changed greatly since it began in WWII, when the US agreed to provide some training and arms to the Iranian government. Soviet troops remained in Iran well past their deadline to withdraw in 1946, which the US took as a sign of Stalin's expansionistic objectives in the region.

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[251] "Monthly Progress Report of Aid to Turkey Program, September 1951," JAMMAT, Box 21, E 251A, RG 334, NARA.

[252] "Monthly Progress Report of Aid to Turkey Program, June 1951," 5 Nov 1951, JAMMAT, Box 21, E 251A, RG 334, NARA.

Iranian maneuvering ousted the Soviets without bloodshed, and the US continued military aid to the country, at the same time courting Shah Reza Pahlavi, a pro-Western conservative. As Iranian nationalists agitated to take over the country's oil reserves in the 1950s, the Eisenhower administration used the Central Intelligence Agency to help orchestrate a coup and install the Shah as leader of Iran. Assistance to Iran grew to support the Shah's government, provide security against internal revolt, and deter Soviet aggression. The Shah used US aid to protect himself and his nation from the Soviets, weaken British influence on Iran's oil production, and entrench himself politically. The Eisenhower administration considered it critical to shore up the Iranian regime until oil revenue picked up and improved their economy.[253] By the end of the 1950s, Iran received $500 million in aid, much of it for military purposes.[254] The political side of the mission to Iran—maintaining the Shah—overshadowed the advisors' efforts to train up the Iranian armed forces, making those training objectives mostly secondary.[255]

US military aid to Iran began amidst the first wave of assistance missions after World War II, with a 1947 package of $25 million, in the form of credit for discounted

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[253] James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian* Relations (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988); Kristen Blake, *The US-Soviet Confrontation in Iran, 1945-1962: A Case in the Annals of the Cold War* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2009); Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East since 1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); and Mark Lytle, *The Origins of the Iranian-American Alliance, 1941-1953* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1987).

[254] John D. Williams, "After the Countercoup: Advising the Imperial Armed Forces of Iran," (MA Thesis, CGSC, 2010) 5-7.

[255] Thomas M. Ricks, "U. S. Military Missions to Iran, 1943-1978: The Political Economy of Military Assistance" *Iranian Studies* 12 (1979): 163-193.

US equipment.[256] Advisors, including Brigadier General Norman Schwartzkopf, had worked with the Iranian Gendarmerie in the 1940s. The mission expanded after WWII to include an army training component, known as the US Army Military Mission, or ARMISH. ARMISH grew in 1949 to include the army and air force, with the objective of modernizing them for defensive operations against the Soviets, and for maintaining internal security and stability. In 1950, the US established a formal MAAG, making Iran an official recipient of US military aid, in the same form as Greece, Turkey, and other nations. The MAAG and ARMISH worked together, mainly guiding the Iranian high command and processing US materiel deliveries.[257] The Shah wanted improved military forces for regional defense and to maintain himself in power. The advisors believed the Shah's close control of the armed forces limited their combat effectiveness. However, the Shah's solid hold on power fit US strategic objectives, by providing Iranian bases for US aircraft and blocking a potential Soviet route to the Middle East oilfields.

American advisors in Iran usually either worked with Iranian officials and staff in Teheran—a relatively modern city—or deep in the countryside with Field Advisory Teams, where they trained Iranian troops stationed nearer the borders with the Soviet Union. Life in the Field Advisory Teams could be primitive. Colonel James Meyers, an ARMISH advisor in 1958, was attached to the Iranian 9th Infantry Division. His "Team House" had a dirt-floor and water filtered through gravel and sand. Meyers described his station as "the boonies" and spent as almost much time hunting game and

[256] Condit, *Joint Chiefs*, vol. 2, 39.

[257] Ricks, "U. S. Military Missions," 166-167.

visiting with mountain shepherds as he did advising and training Iranian troops.[258] In this respect, the mission in Iran resembled that in Turkey—the Americans traveled long distances over rough roads to train troops in arid, mountainous areas.

Meanwhile, the advisors in bustling Teheran worked out of an office building on Roosevelt Avenue, a busy street where Americans had frequent car accidents with inexperienced Iranian drivers.[259] In one 1950 incident, MAAG Sergeant First Class Lewis Castner had an altercation with an Iranian civilian, a Mr. Mahdoub, who blocked a busy intersection with his parked car. It was unclear who threw the first punch, but the investigating American officer suspected it was the Castner, provoked by "the natural characteristics of Iranians, Mr. Mahdoub in particular, of moving and waving his arms." Castner was "administratively admonished." Mr. Mahdoub did not suffered any serious injuries and did not press charges against Castner.[260]

Beyond dirt-floored team houses in the countryside and car accidents in Teheran, daily life for advisors in Iran was similar to other missions in the developing world. "You should not expect to find everything you want in a house," advised the Iranian MAAG's country guide (the "Persian Brochure"). "Settle for a place that meets your basic needs and adjust to the drawbacks." The brochure suggested that families bring a

[258] Colonel James J. Meyers, "Proud to Be: Memoir," 1998, USAHEC.

[259] Major Joseph Mazol, "Report of Accident Investigation," 16 Sep 1951, F Officers Reports of Investigation Files, United States Military Mission with the Iranian Army and the Military Assistance Advisory Group to Iran (hereafter MAAG-Iran), Box 8, E 175, RG 334, NARA.

[260] Major Emanuel Tallackson, "Report of Investigation (Incident involving Sgt 1cl Lewis Castner)," 25 Nov 1950, F Officers Reports of Investigation Files, MAAG-Iran, Box 8, E 175, Record Group 334, NARA.

full set of home tools to affect the "constant repairs" needed in old Iranian housing, and keep dogs to help secure their homes. It provided the contact information for the local Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals shelter.[261]

The advisors encountered a number of obstacles to modernizing the Iranian military and convincing it to adopt American military standards and practices, including old equipment and soldier education. At the start of US assistance, the Shah's armed forces remained mostly foot and hoof-bound. For infantry fighting in mountainous terrain, mules were quite useful, but for the kind of mobile operations Americans envisioned against the Soviets, horse-drawn weapons were a major drawback. US advisors found themselves in the unusual position of gauging horseflesh, suggesting that the Iranians improve equine breeding standards. They praised the veterinary corps, however, finding them professional and well organized.[262]

Trucks could be imported and replace horses with relative ease, but training mechanics to service them and soldiers to drive was another matter. Around 75% of Iranian enlisted personnel could read—a relatively large number, compared to other developing countries—but less than 10% had a high school education. Colonel Vernum Stevens, an ARMISH advisor, wrote in 1953 that the "lack of education makes it difficult if not impossible to teach the operation of a modern supply system."[263] Sanitary

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[261] Headquarters, ARMISH-MAAG, "Persian Borchure," USAHEC.

[262] Major General Vernon Evans, "March 1949 Monthly Report—US Military Mission w/Iranian Army," 1 Apr 1949, F Activities Report Files, MAAG-Iran, Box 3, E 171, RG 334, NARA.

[263] Colonel Vernum Stevens, "April 1953 Monthly Report—USMM w/Iranian Army," Mar 1953, F Activities Reports Files, MAAG-Iran, 1953, Box 3, E 171, RG 334, NARA.

and dietary practices also left much to be desired. Many Iranian units lacked access to clean water—remembering Colonel Meyer's crude water filtration system with the 9th Division—and some units only served the enlisted sweet tea and bread during the day.[264]

Colonel Stevens found that the officers were the greatest weakness in the Iranian armed forces. Enlisted men suffered harsh discipline, but officers violated orders and neglected duties without punishment. Senior officers never delegated authority, "equipment is not issued for fear of loss," and the army lacked an effective inspection system. The Iranian Air Force did not reward dangerous or difficult work. For example, there was no hazard pay for the Iranian Transport Squadron. These pilots, having already flown over 2,000 hours, made the same pay as a desk officer. The pilots resented this system and their morale suffered, "a natural reaction, one which can only be remedied by a complete revision of the system." Even something as seemingly straightforward as prioritizing messages needed overhaul. Low priority messages flooded commanders, leaving them unable to quickly reply to urgent messages. One air force unit briefly fixed the problem in 1953, when they transferred another airman to act as the clerk, but as soon as he was transferred back, the unit returned to its old habits. Colonel Francis Grable, Chief of the USAF Section of the Iranian mission, wrote, "They are obviously not interested in changing."[265]

The Iranian high command also interfered with training. When an air force unit suffered two aircraft crashes that claimed three lives, Iranian higher command insisted it

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[264] *Ibid.*

[265] *Ibid.*

was material failure, not pilot error as the Americans argued. Against the advisors' suggestion, the Iranians grounded the unit for two whole months. Colonel Grable noted, "the Squadron retrogressed and was virtually back where I started, with one exception. The morale of the pilots was lower."[266] The Americans struggled to convince the Iranians to accelerate their training schedules or affect other organizational changes, and decried a lack of "hustle" among their advisees. Brigadier General Richard Whitney, an Army advisor in the early 1960s, wrote in his debriefing that "The pace of all activity in Iran, with the exception of automobile driving, is the pace of the aged."[267]

The US advisors proposed improvement of existing military schools and creating new ones. They helped create a Command and General Staff College and a War College for the scholarly training of Iranian officers, improved armor and transport schools, and began development of new branch schools.[268] Other Iranian schools needed much improvement, such as the air force Technical School's crumbling facilities. Much of the Iranian military establishment held schools in low esteem and had to be convinced of their utility.[269] The US mission also argued for faster promotions, so that American-trained junior officers could move up in the ranks and increase their influence. They urged the Iranians to write efficiency reports and evaluate officers as a method of

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[266] *Ibid.*

[267] Brigadier General Richard W. Whitney, "Debriefing of senior and designated key officers returning from field assignments," 18 Mar 1964, in "Personal Assessment of the Insurgency and Counterinsurgency Situation in Iran," 14 Apr 1962 to 25 Jan 1964, USAHEC.

[268] Evans, "March 1949 Monthly Activity Report," 1 Apr 1949, F Activities Reports Files, MAAG-Iran, Box 3, E 171, RG 334, NARA.

[269] Stevens, "April 1953 Monthly Report."

improving their quality. They also pushed for a new law to allow the Iranian Army to dismiss ineffective officers and generals.[270] Additionally, over 2,000 Iranian officers travelled to the US for training at staff colleges.[271]

By the end of the decade, Iran's military, in physical size and armament, was an impressive force. Approximately 170,000 troops formed twelve infantry divisions, several air force squadrons, and dozens of naval vessels to patrol the Persian Gulf. They had stockpiled enough military supplies to fight for a month. Their arsenal included hundreds of towed artillery pieces, M-41 tanks, and F-84 jets.[272] Though the Americans questioned the Iranians' ability to fight a Soviet invasion, the objective of maintaining Iran as an ally, and keeping the relatively reliable Shah in power, proceeded well. A 1965 report summarized the situation: "No insurmountable obstacles are currently foreseen in achievement of US objectives. This is due to progress made in modernization of Iranian Armed Forces and their demonstated [sic] ability during the 1963 riots in Teheran to maintain internal control."[273]

The US mission to Iran was different than many other assistance missions during the Cold War. Some of the arms provided by the US to Iran were in exchange for Iranian oil. By the early 1960s, the US did not believe Iran was under credible communist threat, but continued large scale assistance and advising anyway, to ensure

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[270] Evans, "March 1949 Monthly Report."

[271] Williams, "After the Countercoup," 46.

[272] Williams, "After the Countercoup," 42-43.

[273] "Military Assistance Plan, Iran," 1963, USAHEC.

the Shah remained in power.[274] The US used assistance to influence the nation's military, civil authorities, and infrastructure. The MAAG oversaw huge military deliveries as the 1960s and 1970s continued, and their role in monitoring this aid was more important than their role in attempting to retrain or improve upon the Iranian's military.[275] The Shah, protected by his military, remained in power until 1979, when he was ousted by a Shiite-led rebellion in part created by his heavy handed use of armed forces the MAAG had trained and supplied.

LIBYA AND ETHIOPIA

US aid to Libya was an unusual case, as Washington suspected no significant internal communist threat to the country, nor was Libya especially important to US strategic interests. In 1954, the Libyan government requested US military assistance in exchange for base rights, which Washington did not did not immediately grant. When the Libyans briefly turned to Soviet-supported Egypt, the Eisenhower administration quickly acted to provide aid, dispatching a survey team to examine Libya's assistance needs. The Joint Chiefs of Staff advised that a $2.7 million sum be granted to Libya over Fiscal Years 1957-1959.[276] The Americans hoped to reduce Soviet, Chinese, and other anti-American influences and increase stability in the oil-rich but infrastructure-poor

[274] Whitney, "Debriefing of senior and designated key officers."

[275] Ricks, "U. S. Military Mission."

[276] Condit, *Joint Chiefs,* vol. 6, 255.

country. Beyond the rule of the aging King Idris, there was little political authority to hold together Libya. Once the King died, the country could succumb to political chaos and come under control of neighboring Egypt, whose worrisome nationalistic tendencies and openness to the Soviet Union the US wished to counteract. Washington hoped that, by improving the strength of Libya's armed forces, they could help create an institution that would maintain order after Idris's death and transfer power safely. The United States also wanted base rights, particularly over a base at Wheelus in the northwest corner of the country.[277]

Libya and the US signed a formal assistance treaty on 30 June 1957.[278] MAAG-Libya activated two months later, their mission to manage delivery of heavy equipment and help the Libyans with their logistics. British advisors conducted tactical training. The Libyan armed forces, around 3,000 strong, not only operated a diverse mix of old equipment, but also lacked facilities to store supplies and spare parts. MAAG-Chief Colonel Edward Sachs noted the low literacy rate among the enlisted personnel, which made filling specialist and technical positions very difficult. The Libyan forces had neither a consistent system of maintenance nor any training standards to speak of. The army had many holidays, a largely illiterate enlisted force, and limited organization above the battalion level.[279] Sachs estimated the Libyans' combat effectiveness as

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[277] "Military Assistance Plan, Libya," 1963, USAHEC.

[278] "Military Assistance Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Libya, 30 June 1957," *Military Assistance Bilaterals.*

[279] Colonel Edward Sachs, "US Military Assistance Group, Libya—Quarterly Activity Report," 31 May 1958, USAHEC.

"zero"—it could only assist the police in internal security, and could not defend against an external threat.[280] Because aid was limited and tactical training of the Libyans remained a strictly British mission, MAAG-Libya was a tiny operation of eight officers, six enlisted, and one civilian.[281]

US assistance and advising to Libya primarily consisted of small deliveries of heavy equipment—trucks, artillery, and a few aircraft—and sending Libyan personnel to train in the United States. Libyan pilots trained at Wheelus airbase, where the US had base rights and operated air force units. A 1963 summary of aid and assistance to Libya declared that US efforts improved "the effectiveness of the Libyan Army" with abilities "equal to other new armies of comparable size." Significantly, the Libyans had achieved "supply consciousness" and wanted to improve their logistical management along US lines.[282] US support to Libya continued on this small scale into the 1960s, before ending after the military took over the country following King Idris's death. It reflected limited US engagement in the Arab world, outside of the immediate objectives of the Cold War.

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[280] "Narrative Statement—Libya, Preliminary Report as of 30 June 1958," 11 Aug 1958, F Historical File, 1959, MAAG Libya, Box 1, E 119-123, RG334, NARA.

[281] "320, Department of the Army Administrative Area Manpower Authorization Voucher for the US Army Element, Military Assistance Advisory Group, Libya", 2 Apr 1958, F MAAG/Libya Personnel Authorization Files, 1958, MAAG-Libya, Box 1, E 119-123, RG 334, NARA.

[282] "Military Assistance Plan, Libya."

ETHIOPIA

A similar, politically expedient arrangement existed in Ethiopia. As part of their May 1953 agreement, the Ethiopians received military aid for internal security, self-defense, regional defense, and possible United Nations missions, in exchange for US access to a strategic radio relay station in the country.[283] The agreement with Ethiopia was also an example of a Third World nation achieving its own objectives in the midst of super-power politicking. The Ethiopians had grown accustomed to US equipment that came into the region during World War II, they wanted a new western ally to replace Britain, and needed arms and training for potential conflicts with its neighbor Somalia.[284]

The advisory mission faced significant obstacles in Ethiopia. Political infighting often prevented military reform and even training. In the MAAG's view, a "general lack of experienced, dependable commanders and staff officers" crippled he Ethiopian Army.[285] Slow-acting officers, who refused to delegate authority, delayed training for both the army and navy.[286] This left services short of vital personnel. At one point, the

[283] "Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement between the United States of America and Ethiopia, 22 May 1953," *Military Assistance Bilaterals*.

[284] Jeffrey Lefebvre, *Arms for the Horn: US Security Policy in Ethiopia and Somalia 1953-1991* (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1991).

[285] Colonel Thomas Howe, "Quarterly Activity Report," 31 Dec 1957, MAAG Ethiopia, F 319 Activity Report 1957, Box 1, E 111, RG 334, NARA.

[286] Colonel Edward S. Berry, "Quarterly Activity Report," 1 Dec 1956, F Quarterly Activity Reports 1956, MAAG Ethiopia, Box 1, E 111, RG 334, NARA.

Ethiopians were so in need of a qualified naval officer they even considered hiring a Norwegian mercenary who worked in the area.[287] Even into the 1960s, Swedes and Norwegians occupied key positions in the navy.[288] In one instance, the army did not want to make use of a MAAG mobile training unit, preferring to keep their training centralized near the capital. The advisors suspected that this was intended to prevent politically undesirable officers from taking advantage of the training opportunity.[289] Beyond training, materiel shortages and educational problems hampered development of the Ethiopian armed forces. The army even lacked sufficient mules to transport its antiquated artillery.[290]

MAAG Ethiopia was a small outfit, with only a few dozen advisors—barely one advisor for every 800 host nation troops—and the Americans did not routinely work below the division level.[291] Most advising, therefore, consisted of consulting the Ethiopian senior commanders, who were a difficult sell on American ideas. They refused to implement a suggestion to establish a department of defense, because it could upset the balance of power within political factions.[292] The MAAG focused on logistics

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[287] Berry, "Quarterly Activity Report," 1 Sep 1956, F Quarterly Activity Reports 1956, MAAG Ethiopia, Box 1, E 111, RG 334, NARA.

[288] Colonel Charles L. Lucas, "Debriefing of senior officers returning from field assignments," 15 Sep 1966, USAHEC.

[289] Howe, "Quarterly Activity Report," 1 Sep 1956.

[290] Berry, "Quarterly Activity Report," 1 Dec 1956.

[291] Lucas, "Debriefing of senior officers."

[292] Howe, "Quarterly Activity Report," 1 Sep 1956.

and maintenance, which took time to gain traction among illiterate and mechanically untrained enlisted men. The most important and effective training occurred in the US, where Ethiopian officers attended armed forces schools and academies. Sending foreign troops to train in the US was quite common throughout the Cold War, and the "ZI" trained troops usually went on to train the rest of their forces in the American style. However, in Ethiopia, this usually effective process met difficulties. Few officers had sufficient command of English to train in the US.[293] Furthermore, the Ethiopian government sometimes blocked passports, making it difficult for officers to apply for US travel.[294] The advisors could find no particular reason for this, but it was probably due to the political affiliations, or lack thereof, of those officers.

Of all the peacetime advisory missions during the Cold War, Ethiopia may have been the most miserable for the MAAG personnel. Bad diet sapped American morale. For diplomatic and budgetary reasons, the MAAG was not allowed to keep a post exchange or a commissary and had to either fly in canned goods, or buy their food locally—food that failed to meet American safety standards. The US Ambassador to Kenya denied the MAAG's request to use its own funds to order fresh meat and dairy from Kenya (whose food safety laws were similar to the US), out of fear of offending the Ethiopian government. Servicemen were allowed to buy their own duty-free imported foods from Kenya, but Colonel Charles P. Howe, chief in 1957-58, noted that the already high cost of living prohibited this, especially for MAAG enlisted. The Ethiopian

[293] Lucas, "Debriefing of senior officers."

[294] Howe, "Quarterly Activity Report," 1 Sep 1956.

government also tried denying these duty free imports despite a treaty obligation to do so. This further exasperated the Americans' financial problems and did little to improve US-Ethiopian relations.[295]

The small MAAG team was also badly overworked. Colonel Howe complained that, despite working evenings and weekends, "backlogs continue to develop and many essential matters are not being handled." Frequent visitors, including American politicians, interrupted work schedules. When advisor tours ended and MAAG personnel departed, it could take weeks to receive replacements, further burdening the understaffed unit. The heavy work load and poor diet literally made the advisors sick; the unit had an unusually high disease rate.[296] To make matters worse, the mission's position on the periphery of the periphery delayed mail service.[297]

A 1963 summary of the US mission in Ethiopia reported mixed results. In ten years, assistance had provided $55 million in weapons, equipment, and training to Ethiopia. At the start of that period, the Ethiopians had no effective military force whatsoever; by 1963, their officers had trained in the United States and the army grew to 25,000 troops in four divisions. The assistance summary considered the small military capable of handling the nation's security threats, primarily internal revolt and minor border skirmishes with Somalia. Most important, the armed forces kept the Emperor in

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[295] Howe, "Memorandum, Logistical Support, MAAG-Ethiopia," 5 Dec 1958, F 000 General 1958, MAAG-Ethiopia, Box 1, E 111, RG 334, NARA.

[296] Howe, "Quarterly Activity Report," 5 Jul 1957, F 319 Activity Report 1957, MAAG-Ethiopia, Box 1, E 111, RG 334, NARA.

[297] Berry, "Quarterly Activity Report," 1 Dec 1956.

power, shielding him from an attempted coup in 1960. Washington hoped the presence of a strong military would keep the country stable when the Emperor eventually died and ensure a smooth transfer of power.[298]

This summary seems at odds with what MAAG personnel reported before, in the 1950s, and after. In 1966, Colonel Lucas, Chief of MAAG-Ethiopia from 1965-1966, described serious problems with the nation's armed forces. They were badly short of qualified commissioned and noncommissioned officers. Some units had to operate across huge physical areas: the 3rd Division, for example, had a 1,000 mile front, supported by only a single dirt road and no wired communications. Logistically, Ethiopian units apparently ignored vehicle maintenance and did not share equipment or parts with other units, even ignoring orders to do so. The army and ministry of defense resisted counter insurgency training and refused to undertake civic or public works programs. Lucas had little positive to report during his 1966 debriefing, except that the Ethiopian armed forces were, at least, better than their Somalian neighbors.[299]

Advice and assistance to Ethiopia was one of the stranger, and more difficult, US missions during the Cold War. The advisors encountered trouble at almost every step and experienced limited success in training their host nation's troops. The difficulty reflected Ethiopia's complex internal politics, with which the military were closely involved. It must also be noted, however, the mission was a low priority for the United States. From 1953 to 1963, the US only spent $55 million on assistance to Ethiopia—

[298] "Military Assistance Plan: Ethiopia," 1963, USAHEC.

[299] Lucas, "Debriefing of senior officers."

during roughly the same time period, Thailand received $200 million. When other MAAGs were led by generals, a colonel led MAAG-Ethiopia. The Americans suspected no significant internal problems for the country, nor was external attack a major threat. For US policy makers, military assistance held open access to the radio transmitter facilities. This, rather than major improvement of their military, was the important objective.

EAST ASIA

In the years immediately following World War II, the United States believed that East Asia—China, Korea, and Japan, and the islands and sea routes in their vicinity—would be a source of stability and strength, thanks to China and Japan. The former was to be under control of Chiang Kaishek's Kuomintang Nationalist Party and provide a strong counter to Soviet interests in Asia. Japan, politically and militarily neutralized, could become an economic leader for the region and, hopefully, a huge market for US goods. However, the devastating aftermath of World War II, Japanese imperialism, and civil war rapidly undermined US hopes in the region.

A series of events rewrote US policy in East Asia from 1945 to 1950. The US-supported Nationalists were defeated by communist forces and Chiang, whose army and government had absorbed billions of dollars of US aid, retreated to the island of Taiwan. Many American policy makers would have been happy to leave the Nationalists withering on the vine, but in 1950, war broke out in Korea. There, the legacy of Japanese

colonialism, antagonistic factions, and Cold War influences led first to guerrilla war and then open conflict. The northerners were supported by the Soviet Union and later by Communist China. The United States and South Korea, leading a United Nations coalition, faced the communists in a brutal fight through 1953, when they agreed upon an uneasy cease fire.

War in Asia forced the US to adjust its strategy. American policy makers envisioned a defensive perimeter off the Asian mainland, which first included Japan and the Ryuku Islands and later stretched to fit South Korea and Taiwan. Though the US briefly attempted to roll back communist gains by invading North Korea, the costs of waging full scale war in Asia proved too great to sustain. The US planned to encircle mainland Asia with naval and air bases, and build up the military forces of its allies in the region—Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea—through the use of military assistance and the hard work of advisory groups.[300]

In Taiwan, the MAAG encountered educational problems that slowed training, an aged officer corps, and unusual political conditions. In Japan, however, advisors faced a war-weary and anti-military population, and a Self Defense Force that resembled a civil service rather than military organization. In the Republic of Korea, the advisory mission faced a tremendously difficult mission, as they tried to train and reorganize the armed forces in midst of active war. Though the MAAGs had some success training

[300] Warren I. Cohen, ed., *New Frontiers in America-East Asian Relations: Essays Presented to Dorothy Borg* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983); Charles M. Dobbs, *The United States and East Asia since 1945* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990); Yonosuke Nagai and Akira Iriye, eds., *The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977); and William W. Stueck, Jr., *The Road to Confrontation: American Policy toward China and Korea, 1947-1950* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981).

these forces, like in Korea, they encountered the standard problem of assistance and advisory missions around the world: the host nations simply could not support the large scale armed forces desired by the Americans without continued US support, even in peace time.

TAIWAN

During World War II, the United States supported the Nationalist Chinese with weapons, supplies, and expertise, primarily for use as an ally against the Japanese, but also with the strategic objective of creating a major post-war Asian power. Nationalist forces remained mostly unable or unwilling to fight the Japanese, but the US continued providing large amounts of military aid after the war. Chiang Kaishek and the Nationalists pushed north against the Chinese Communists, but soon met with military and political disaster. In April 1948, Congress approved an emergency package, which the Nationalists spent on military hardware and supplies. The emergency aid had little effect, as military defeats and domestic upheaval sent the Nationalist forces retreating to the south. Chiang's government and hundreds of thousands of troops withdrew to Taiwan (Formosa) in December 1949.

The United States, frustrated by nearly a decade of failure in China, cut off aid until the crisis of the Korean War, when the Truman administration again began to supply military and economic assistance to the Republic of China (RC) and its armed forces. The United States based aircraft on the island and supported Taiwan with naval

forces, to shield the island from mainland invasion. From 1951 to 1965, the United States spent approximately $2.5 billion on Taiwanese military aid, almost twice as much as it spent on economic aid. Military assistance peaked at the beginning, with $375.2 million spent from 1951-1954. Military aid ended in 1965; other economic support ceased when the US opened formal diplomatic ties with Communist China in the 1970s.[301]

The US advisory experience with the RC began in World War II, as the Nationalists fought against the Japanese. The mission withdrew after the war, but returned in 1948 when the Nationalists met with disaster against the communists. Initially, they were only to advise on organizational matters and establish schools. They gradually took on training roles, and in September 1948, the advisory groups merged into the Joint United States Military Advisory Group to the Republic of China (JUSMAG China). They provided technical assistance and training guidance, but did not advise on operational or strategic matters, and were ordered to stay away from combat areas. For their part, the American commanders—including General Albert C. Wedemeyer, who had replaced General Joseph Stillwell during the war, and JUSMAG Director and Army Group Chief Major General David Barr—knew from experience that

[301] Min-Hua Chiang, "The US Aid and Taiwan's Post-War Economic Development, 1951-1965," *African and Asian Studies* 13 (2014): 100-120. For more on US-Taiwan relations in the first decade of the Cold War, see Robert D. Accinelli, *Crisis and Commitment: United States Policy toward Taiwan, 1950-1955* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); George C. Eliades, "Once More unto the Breach: Eisenhower, Dulles, and Public Opinion during the Offshore Islands Crisis of 1958," *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 2 (Winter 1993): 343-367; John W. Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance: Nationalist China and American Cold War Strategy in Asia* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1997); and Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States, 1945-1992: Uncertain Friendships* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1994).

the Chinese officers were unlikely to accept American advice, and worried that they would deflect blame onto the Americans if combat operations went awry. JUSMAG China kept a hands-off approach.[302]

JUSMAG China was short lived. Communist counter-attacks in the north devastated the Nationalist forces, and the offensives carried southward, seizing important Nationalist strongholds. JUSMAG's operations were formally suspended in March 1949 and the advisors withdrew. Chiang's government retreated to Taiwan in December 1949. Major General Barr, in his final report, argued that the Nationalists had over extended themselves in the drive north. They refused to retreat when prudent to do so, their armed forces did not work together cohesively, and the American advisors were too few and could not give direct operational advice.[303]

As Chiang and the Nationalists ensconced themselves on Taiwan, Washington considered its options. Though they did not want the island to fall to the communists, because of its position astride shipping routes and the island's value to the Japanese economy, policymakers were also tired of throwing dollars into the money pit of the Nationalist Chinese government. For the first months of 1950, therefore, the Truman administration and Congress agreed upon limited economic aid for Taiwan, but no military aid.[304] The communist invasion of South Korea shifted US attitudes, however. Just as it triggered major spending on NATO countries, it also resulted in increased aid

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[302] Condit, *Joint Chiefs,* vol 2., 241-243.

[303] Condit, *Joint Chiefs,* vol 2., 255-256.

[304] Condit, *Joint Chiefs,* vol 2, 257-262.

to Asia. In 1951, the Americans extended military assistance to Taiwan, to "maintain its internal security or its legitimate self-defense" and perform as part of the US defensive perimeter around Asia.[305] JUSMAG also reactivated.

Communist Chinese action against Quemoy and Matsu, small islands in the strait between Taiwan and the mainland, drove the US to establish a formal mutual defense treaty in December 1954 which provided the Nationalists with long-term military aid and support from the United States. Military assistance played as much a psychological role as it did a practical one: the Nationalist Chinese could now rely upon the same kind of alliance as enjoyed by South Korea, Japan, and Europe. The agreement quickly came into play, during later crises with the Communists over control of islands between the mainland and Taiwan, as the United States pledged naval support in case of a communist attack. [306]

As in other advisory missions, the Americans trained the Nationalist armed forces through a combination of direct instruction, schools, and education in the continental US. By 1954, the Nationalists had sent many students to the US for training; MAAG-Taiwan had reorganized military schools along American lines, and high-ranking Chinese were sent on 3-week "special orientation courses" in the US, where they visited military installations.[307]

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[305] "Agreement effected by exchange of noted at Taipei, 30 Jan to 9 Feb 1951," *Military Assistance Bilaterals*.

[306] Hsiao-Ting Lin, "U.S.-Taiwan Diplomacy Revisited: Chiang Kai-shek, *Baituan*, and the 1954 Mutual Defense Pact," *Diplomatic History* 37 (April 2013): 971-994.

[307] "Comments by United States Military Assistance Advisory Groups."

An unusual situation in Taiwan complicated the American mission. A small force of Japanese officers, known as the *Baituan*, remained with the Nationalists well into the 1960s. They trained officers and generals separately from the MAAG, and influenced the army's culture. They even helped direct operational planning. Chiang used the Japanese trainers to keep the Nationalists from being fully indoctrinated by the Americans, and to weaken his subordinates, some of whom were quite popular with the Americans. The *Baituan* also helped plan offensive operations against the mainland, which the US vehemently opposed.[308]

Early reports on the Nationalists' progress revealed mixed results. A MAAG-Taiwan report, generated in 1954, showed American efforts in a positive light. US aid has reorganized and rearmed NGRC armed forces and standardized their heterogeneous mix of Russian, Japanese, German, and American weapons. Though the Chinese did not maintain their equipment as well as the Americans would have liked, the advisors acknowledged the low education of most Chinese troops and their lack of basic mechanical knowledge. The advisors trained down to the battalion level, and had convinced the Ministry of National Defense to adopt US doctrines. Overall, MAAG-Taiwan believed that "There has been a tremendous improvement in the combat efficiency of the NGRC Armed Forces, particularly in the last six months. Essential to this improvement has been the receipt of military defense assistance from mid-1951 to the present."[309]

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[308] Hsiao-Ting, "U.S.-Taiwan Diplomacy Revisited," 975-981.

[309] "Comments by United States Military Assistance Advisory Groups."

Other observers were less optimistic about the Nationalists' progress, however. In 1954, President Eisenhower asked retired General James A. Van Fleet to review US assistance missions in Asia. He found numerous problems in Taiwan. According to Van Fleet, the armed forces needed a functioning replacement system, improved unit training, better leaders and logistical competency. The armed forces were top-heavy, with three times as many officers, relative to enlisted men, as the US. Military rations were short on healthy vitamins and protein. Many troops had foot injuries, due to bad diet and cheap shoes. Training exercises lacked realism and units were too dispersed to allow large unit maneuvers. They fielded tanks and other armored vehicles, but Van Fleet believed such equipment was beyond the RC's ability to maintain. Even by the summer of 1954, the time of Van Fleet's fact-finding mission, "not a single division" in the NGRC was at full strength. Furthermore, many Nationalist officers and senior enlisted were too old to fight effectively. Van Fleet urged that they begin inducting and training native-born Taiwanese.[310]

One area where the Nationalist forces showed great potential was indoctrination. Though often a weak point for nonwestern countries, the RC Armed Forces General Political Department served to indoctrinate Chinese and native Taiwanese recruits on the objectives and defining characteristics of the Nationalist government, and on the nature of the primary foe, the Communist Chinese. Though some Americans were uncomfortable with the notion of political officers in the armed forces, equating them to

[310] Van Fleet, "Report of Ambassador James A. Van Fleet: Formosa," F 102/42, Box 102, Van Fleet Papers, Marshall Library.

the Red Army's commissars, Lieutenant Colonel Charles H. Barber, the MAAG-Taiwan Assistant Chief of Staff, considered them a valuable asset. They helped improve the military's morale and made their reason for being—the defense of Taiwan against communist attack—clear to the regular enlisted. Further, the General Political Department was the main instrument in improving the armed forces' greatest weakness: poor education. The Department established literacy courses in army barracks. In 1949, 21.8% of troops were totally illiterate, but this rate had plummeted to .26% by 1951. General education levels also improved; 30% of Chinese troops had a junior high school education or higher in 1951, compared to 22% in 1949.[311]

The NGRC armed forces had, by the latter half of the decade, improved their military capabilities, thanks in no small part to their MAAG advisors, but still fell short in several key areas. They could defend the island, with US naval and air support, but could not project power elsewhere. Considering the RC's aggressive policies toward the mainland, this could have actually been a blessing to US policy. Use of artillery remained problematic, and morale, despite the attempts by the General Political Department to improve it through education and entertainment, was low among enlisted and junior officers. MAAG-Taiwan believed the troops would make an enemy attack on

[311] Lieutenant Colonel Charles H. Barber, "China's Political Officer System," *Military Review* 33 (July 1953). The statistic on literacy should be used with caution—"totally illiterate" and "not totally illiterate" is a narrow difference—but would still represent improvement.

the island "costly to an invading force," but the Chinese armed forces remained heavily reliant upon US aid and support.[312]

JAPAN

The United States wanted Japan as a staging area for conflicts on mainland Asia, and as a long-term bulwark against communist expansion in Asia. Japan was part of the "defense perimeter" that the invasion of Korea had threatened to penetrate. Its proximity to the Soviet Union and China put it in potential danger of communist attack.

The United States dominated postwar Japan. They led the effort to democratize the island nation, prevent the rise of an influential communist party, rehabilitate the economy, and demilitarize the island nation. Though Americans and Japanese often shared positive individual relationships, the occupiers held stereotypical ideas about Asians: that the Japanese were followers, accustomed to top-down leadership, good at imitating and copying, but weak original thinkers. The Japanese were an "obedient herd" Americans could shape in their own image. [313]

Japan's post-war constitution, developed by General Douglas MacArthur's occupation government, reflected US and European legal concepts. It was designed to undo the power of Japan's family houses and deconstruct its military forces. It

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[312] Major General F. S. Bowen, Chief-MAAG, "Revision, Country Statement, MAP, Non-NATO Countries, MAAG-Taiwan," 30 Jun 1957, and "Revision of Country Statement," 15 Jul 1957, USAHEC.

[313] John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1999), 73-75 and 213-218.

introduced some liberal reforms to Japanese society and government. However, it did little to weaken Japan's conservative political leaders and corporations. Though the United States controlled postwar Japan, the Japanese themselves conducted much of the day-to-day running of the country, and retained many elements of their culture and system of government.[314]

Strategically, the United States saw Japan as base area for military operations in Asia. Early war plans for bombardment of the Soviet Union included the use of Okinawan and Japanese bases. Before the Korean War, American planners barely entertained the notion of rebuilding Japanese military forces, believing instead that defense of the islands remained an American task, though General MacArthur did propose the creation of a Japanese constabulary.[315] The potential of an independent, neutral Japan defusing US-Soviet tensions in Asia appealed to the State Department, and for much of 1949 and early 1950, the Americans considered a final peace treaty and removal of most US forces from Japan.[316]

The invasion of Korea solidified American intentions for using the island as a base. In early 1951, as the 8th Army in Korea beat a hasty retreat from Chinese attack, the US first floated the idea of creating Japanese defense forces. This would allow some US forces to withdraw and improve Japanese internal security. In August 1951, the US

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[314] Theodore Cohen, *Remaking Japan: The American Occupation as New Deal*, ed. Herbert Passin (New York: Free Press, 1987); Laura Hein, "Revisiting America's Occupation of Japan," *Cold War History* 11 (November 2011); Kawai Kazuo, *Japan's American Interlude* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

[315] Condit, *Joint Chiefs*, vol. 2, 157, 163, and 269.

[316] Poole, *Joint Chiefs*, vol. 4, 223-226.

signed a formal peace treaty which ended occupation and granted Japanese independence. The treaty came with exclusive base rights for the United States. In barely two years, the US moved from disarming Japan and advocating its neutrality, to seeking Japan as an ally against the Soviet Union.[317]

Despite the Japanese constitution, which denounced war, Japan began some rearmament as soon as the Korean War began. The Japanese National Police Reserve grew from 30,000 in 1950 to 110,000 men by 1952, and the US removed restrictions on equipment and provided support for training programs. The Americans and Japanese also began a coastal defense navy and a defensive air force.[318] The US envisioned a large ground force of 10-15 divisions and robust air and naval forces, but the limitations of defense budgets and anti-military public opinion in Japan, reduced this to six army divisions and considerably smaller air and naval forces. Military Assistance Advisory Group, Japan, activated in March 1954.[319]

In 1954, Japan formally established the Japanese Self Defense Forces. The JSDF consisted of the ground, naval, and air forces, all oriented toward defensive operations of the Japanese archipelago. The MAAG coordinated with the Japanese, to provide material and training support, as in other assistance missions. The Americans worried of invasion or aerial attack, but also considered blockade-by-submarine a major threat to Japan, reflecting their own operations in World War II. Thus, the advisors prioritized

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[317] Poole, *Joint Chiefs,* vol 4, 226-236.

[318] Poole, *Joint Chiefs,* vol 4, 238-240.

[319] Watson, *Joint Chiefs,* vol. 5, 274-275.

the development of the Maritime Self Defense Force (MSDF) and Air Self Defense Force (ASDF) over the Ground Self Defense Force (GSDF).[320] A strengthened Japan could contribute to the defense of the North Pacific and resist internal problems, such as a communist or leftist take-over of the government. It was vital to American strategy that Japan remain a safe, secure staging area off the Asian mainland, for American ground troops and air forces.[321]

MAAG-Japan worried about Japan's willingness to contribute to its own defense.[322] Postwar Japan erased much of the militarism of the 1930s and 1940s. MAAG advisors, well into the 1960s, worried the Japanese felt "little sense of civic responsibility," and instead created a "fiction" they no longer needed a military. The Japanese government also failed to consult the public while creating or maintaining the SDF, which added to the controversy of the JSDF's very existence since the cataclysm of WWII.[323]

MAAG-Japan's tasks were mainly managerial, focused on supply shipments and handling requests of US materiel. The mission did include a strong, political aspect, however: the advisors met with Japanese leaders to convince them of the need to develop their defense forces. This would make them more secure, the Americans

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[320] "US Military Assistance Advisory Group, Japan: A Decade of Defense in Japan," 1964, USAHEC.

[321] "Military Assistance Plan: Japan," 1963, USAHEC.

[322] Takashi Yoneyama, "The Establishment of the ROK Armed Forces and the Japan Self-Defense Forces and the Activities of the U.S. Military Advisory Groups to the ROK and Japan," *NIDS Journal of Defense and Security* 16 (Dec 2014): 69-98.

[323] "A Decade of Defense in Japan."

argued, and free up US forces for operations elsewhere. The advisors conducted this mission carefully, so as to avoid infringing upon the Japanese leadership so soon after their independence from US occupation.[324]

The Americans enjoyed good relations with the Japanese, with "no real or apparent problems involved in carrying out the MAAG mission." The Americans had a "very close relationship and a feeling of mutual understanding" with the JSDF. The MAAG had "excellent" personnel, many of whom underwent a month of orientation at the Military Assistance Institute. Officers also attended a 6-week Japanese language course once in Japan. MAAG personnel viewed Japan as that elusive good duty, with fine housing, interesting local sights, and a prestigious status among the Japanese.[325] In 1954, there were 762 American advisors; by 1960, the mission shrank to 210, as most deliveries of US equipment were accomplished.[326]

By 1964, the JSDF had made some progress toward becoming an effective force. The MSDF and ASDF had plenty of aircraft, ships, and high quality personnel. Despite Japan's demonstrated ability at naval warfare, however, they required considerable start up work. Japanese maritime industry, damaged in the war, could not immediately produce new ships, and unlike the United States, which could draw on a large pool of experienced naval officers, many of Japan's remaining veterans were too old to serve.

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[324] Yoneyama, "The Establishment of the ROK Armed Forces."

[325] "MAAG Japan: Leadership Problems, February 1964," 1964, USAHEC.

[326] Yoneyama, "The Establishment of the ROK Armed Forces," 86.

In a strange twist of history, American and Japanese sailors now worked and trained together.[327]

The GSDF struggled to train and develop. There were few training spaces available in crowded Japan. All three of the services struggled keeping the best personnel, but the GSDF experienced the hardest time doing so. Japan's industry, growing at a phenomenal rate in the 1960s, drew away educated technicians and managers. Furthermore, the JSDF operated more like a civil service than a military. Personnel could resign at any time and were subject to neither military courts nor strict secrecy laws.[328] The ground forces also displayed lackluster performance while on maneuvers.[329]

The SDF frequently deployed for disaster relief during earthquakes and typhoons, both common in Japan. They also loaned manpower and expertise to many construction projects, especially those in rural areas that Japan developed in the 1960s. They built roads, flood controls, communication centers, play grounds, and new schools. Construction and disaster relief did contribute to the assistance program's economic and social development objective, though perhaps more directly than intended.[330] The Americans worried that such operations distracted the SDF from its combat training.

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[327] Van Fleet, "Van Fleet Mission, Reports (11), Japan," F 103/2, Box 103, Van Fleet Papers, Marshall Library.

[328] "A Decade of Defense in Japan."

[329] John M. Throckmorton, "Formation and Training of Allied Asiatic Armies," 1955, AWCSP, USAHEC.

[330] "A Decade of Defense in Japan."

By the mid-1960s, the Americans reported a mixed assessment of the JSDF. On the one hand, the force was "friendly to the US, loyal to the present government and does not appear to be influenced by leftist pressures." However, after ten years of training and supplying, the JSDF remained "incapable, acting alone, of defending Japan against direct military aggression." Japan relied on the US because the "small size of her military forces, insufficient quantities of modern weapons and munitions, lack of battlefield or strategic mobility, inexperience in the command and control of joint operations, inadequate logistic support capability and the extremely low percentage of national income which has been spent in support of her military establishment."[331]

The Americans nevertheless considered MAAG-Japan's mission a success. Assistance and training created a system of gradual military build-up and improvement. The JSDF freed up at least some US forces from direct defense of the island. Assistance primed industry, putting Japanese to work repairing and handling military equipment. The MAAG also exerted influence on defense planning and politics, which made it easier to tie Japanese forces into overall American strategy. Whatever the weaknesses of the JSDF—inadequate personnel, high turnover, low supply levels, no large-scale training, a general population uninterested in military affairs—they remained "one of the most stable and politically conservative forces in present-day Japan. Assistance and advising, at minimum cost to the US, has made possible the development in Japan of a major positive source of Free World strength in the Far East."[332]

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[331] "Military Assistance Plan: Japan."

[332] "Military Assistance Plan: Japan."

SOUTH KOREA

The training and advisory effort in South Korea was one of the great military successes of the Cold War, and has been covered extensively by Bryan R. Gibby in *The Will to Win.* Gibby argued that the American Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG) was vital in creating a combat effective Republic of Korea Army (ROKA) and that the ROKA was instrumental in the negotiated settlement of 1953—therefore, KMAG was vital to the entire war effort.

KMAG's mission in Korea was quite different than other MAAGs, in that the advisors found themselves in open battle and were part of the command structure of an American-led combat force. Lieutenant General James A. Van Fleet, who took command of the theater in 1951, played a prominent role in KMAG and the development of the ROKA. Though the ROKA remained incomplete at the end of hostilities in 1953—unable to logistically support itself and lacking in air- and naval forces—and had greater support from the US than other advisory missions, the ROKA probably progressed further and faster than any other advisory mission, and in more difficult circumstances..

KMAG was born during the confused US occupation of South Korea following WWII. American leaders, unfamiliar with Korean customs, politics, or needs, mishandled economic programs, dismissed the Koreans as inexperienced natives, and kept Japanese-installed leaders in power. Korean agitation for more local autonomy led to the establishment of a Korean Constabulary, the first step toward an army for the new

nation. Early recruitment problems for the Constabulary were eventually solved and by 1949, the organization effectively fought bandits, political malcontents, and a growing communist insurgency in the south.[333] The Constabulary evolved into the Republic of Korea Army (ROKA) and by the spring of 1950, they had defeated communist insurgency, in part thanks to effective combat training by their KMAG advisors.

The ROKA could maintain internal security against guerrillas, agitators, and bandits, but collapsed during the 1950 North Korean invasion. KMAG trained the ROKA to defeat an insurgency, not a major conventional attack, which was far beyond the abilities of the nascent army. Their enemy, the Korean People's Army (KPA), was well trained, led by a developed cadre of officers, and heavily armed. That the first American reinforcements in Korea also fared poorly reflected the capabilities of the North Koreans. As the ROKA forces disintegrated during the retreat from the 38th Parallel, some KMAG officers actually led South Korean and died in the fighting. The South Koreans, now part of the United Nations Command 8th Army, managed to regroup around the Pusan Perimeter, along with the newly arrived American units. The advisors helped coordinate US artillery and air support. The ROKA not only regrouped during the Pusan battles, but even earned respect from the American commanders in the area. That respect was short lived, however, because the Koreans suffered another catastrophe later that year against the newly arrived Chinese forces. Again, the ROKA's shaky foundation—no real officer corps, inadequately trained troops, weak logistics—were their downfall. Many KMAG personnel were killed or captured alongside their ROKA

[333] Gibby, *The Will to Win*, 19-21.

allies during the winter of 1950-51, and the Chinese pounded Korean units well into 1951.[334]

KMAG and the ROKA benefited from the arrival of a new overall commander in the theater in 1951. Lieutenant General James A. Van Fleet replaced Lieutenant General Matthew B. Ridgway as commander of the UN forces. Invigorating the ROKA was one of Van Fleet's missions in Korea. Major General J. Lawton Collins, then Army Chief of Staff, hoped that Van Fleet could do for the Koreans what he had done for the Greeks and develop an effective school system and military leadership.[335] Unlike Douglas MacArthur, who had written off the ROKA early in the war, or Walton Walker, who lost interest in the South Koreans after the breakout from Pusan, Van Fleet had big plans to train and develop them. The advisors would use schools, basic training, and field training of large units to improve the ROKA's combat abilities, and guide and assist their frontline operations. The Americans would also improve the Korean officer corps, still inexperienced and under-trained.[336] Van Fleet wanted sixty day training cycles for ROK divisions, "the same as we did for Greek divisions," and hoped that new KMAG leadership would invigorate the advisory group.[337]

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[334] Gibby, *The Will to Win*, 124-176.

[335] Major General J. Lawton Collins to Van Fleet, 24 May 1951, F 68/17, Box 68, Van Fleet Papers, Marshall Library.

[336] Van Fleet to Lieutenant General Matthew G. Ridgway, 1 Apr 1952, F 86/1, Box 86, Van Fleet Papers, Marshall Library.

[337] Collins to Van Fleet.

Summer 1951 was a turning point for the ROKA. The tactical stalemate on the frontlines, where Chinese manpower unsuccessfully vied against UN firepower, gave the Koreans time to regroup and train. Units cycled out of the line and went to KMAG's new Field Training Command, where they worked in eight-week increments, developing marksmanship, tactical proficiency, control of artillery, communications, and leadership. KMAG successfully retrained all ROK units over the remainder of the war, and the system vastly improved their abilities.[338]

General Van Fleet's approach to advising the ROK forces reflected his time in Greece and his emphasis on the human aspects of training and warfare. He rejected the idea, held by some KMAG officers, that the Koreans were untrainable: "we would not accept such statements . . . I insisted that they make an effort even if it failed. My approach was one of confidence and praise to the ROK Leaders much the same as I treated the Greek Commanders."[339] He requested several of his Greek hands be transferred to assist the KMAG, and credited some of the unit's improvement to these "key personnel."[340]

Van Fleet used public speeches and news interviews as he had in Greece, to lavish praise on the ROK and Korea generally. He described a ROK patrol action as an "outstanding performance . . . [with] initiative and aggressive spirit.[341] The Korean and

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[338] Gibby, *The Will to Win*, 266.

[339] Van Fleet to Family, 12 May 1951, F 78/3, Box 78, Van Fleet Papers, Marshall Library.

[340] Van Fleet to Ridgway, 21 Aug 1951, F 86/1, Box 86, Van Fleet Papers, Marshall Library.

[341] Van Fleet, "General Statement," 21 May 1952, F 95/2, Box 95, Van Fleet Papers, Marshall Library.

Chinese communists were "the same type of enemy" as he had faced in Greece, "degenerate, ruthless, never compromising"—but at least in Korea, there was "dirt to dig into, while in Greece we had rock foxholes above ground."[342] He visited orphanages in Seoul and elsewhere.[343] In July 1952, KMAG-Chief Brigadier General C. E. Ryan urged Van Fleet to create a program of support for wounded ROK veterans, because it would hurt troop morale to see "neglected, disabled veterans" struggling to survive. Van Fleet began planning for just such a program.[344] When Van Fleet departed Korea in 1952, he did so with flair and drama, saying to a massive crowd in Seoul, "I shall not ask you to give me back my heart. I leave it with you."[345]

When the cease-fire went into effect in 1953, ROKA and KMAG had much to be proud of. ROKA units could plan battles, coordinate artillery fire, manage their own personnel, operate as part of a division- or corps-sized force, and had developed the cohesion and esprit d'corps to withstand the shock and chaos of battle. They had come a long way from a constabulary force fighting against bandits, guerrillas, and mutineers. But the ROKA was still not self-sufficient and relied upon US military aid to function. In this way, they were similar to almost every other assistance mission.

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[342] Van Fleet, "General Statement," 16 Apr 1951, F 95/3, Box 95, Van Fleet Papers, Marshall Library.

[343] Van Fleet, "General Statement," 18 Mar 1952, F 95/4, Box 95, Van Fleet Papers, Marshall Library

[344] Brigadier General C. E. Ryan to Van Fleet, 30 July 1952, and Van Fleet to Lieutenant General Mark Clark, 25 Aug 1952, F 86/6, Box 86, Van Fleet Papers, Marshall Library.

[345] Van Fleet, "General Statement," 30 Jan 1953, F 95/4, Box 95, Van Fleet Papers, Marshall Library.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

For most of the 1950s, the United States saw Southeast Asia as a secondary theater, important to Western and American security because of its value to Japanese and European markets, in particular France. US involvement in the region came about as the French war to retain their Indochina colonies spiraled out of control and necessitated, in American eyes, the delivery of US hardware and equipment to help defeat communist-led forces in Vietnam. If the French withered on the Vietnamese vine, the Americans worried, they would either bankrupt themselves or follow through on threats to back out of their commitments to European defense. This led to gradually increasing commitment to Vietnam (handled in the next chapter) and Thailand. Washington worried that the communists could make incremental advances in Southeast Asia, using either insurgencies to topple weak governments, or conventional invasions, as had happened in Korea. Because the United States initially wished to avoid direct involvement, it limited support of Southeast Asian nations to military aid for Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia, and support of first France and then the Republic of Vietnam forces.[346]

Political and military success in the region, outside of Thailand, proved elusive. In Laos, Washington wanted to prevent a communist takeover and block land routes

[346] Robert M. Blum, *Drawing the Line: The Origin of the American Containment Policy in East Asia* (New York: Norton, 1982); Gary R. Hess, *The United States Emergence as a Southeast Asian Power, 1940-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987); Mark Atwood Lawrence, *Assuming the Burden*; Alan J. Levine, *The United States and the Struggle for Southeast Asia, 1945-1975* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); and Robert J. McMahon, *The Limits of Empire: The United States and Southeast Asia since World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999)

used by the North Vietnamese to infiltrate South Vietnam. The US provided military and economic support to a bewildering series of governments, as coups, counter-coups, and coalitions frequently changed the nation's political landscape. Beginning in secret, with the so-called Programs Evaluation Office, MAAG-Laos officially began in 1961. Military assistance to Laos never produced a stable, US-aligned government, and was tangled in a web of secret and sometimes illegal arms dealing through the Central Intelligence Agency. In neighboring Cambodia, the United States also provided military aid and advisors, but the Cambodian government, hoping to follow a neutralist path, opted out of US aid in 1963.[347] Aid to South Vietnam lasted more than two decades and ended in disaster. Only in Thailand did the US develop a long term ally.

THAILAND

After World War II, Thailand wanted to return to the international community following its wartime alliance with Japan. Positive relations with the United States—who were forgiving of Thailand's dalliance with Japan—and maneuvering by the Thai government brought the nations together. Thailand was an important potential ally to the US. It was strategically placed in the middle of South East Asia, hosted a number of natural resources like tin and rubber, and had excellent port facilities. Further, its rice production was not as devastated by the war as Burma's and Vietnam's. Thailand's

[347] Timothy N. Castle, *At War in the Shadow of Vietnam: U.S. Military Aid to the Royal Lao Government, 1955-1975* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993) and Kenton J. Clymer, "Decolonization, Nationalism and Anti-Communism: United States Relations with Cambodia, 1945-1954," *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 6 (1997): 91-124.

leadership remained in flux after the war, as several governments fell in succession, until totalitarian dictator Phibun Songkhram—who collaborated with the Japanese and orchestrated two coups—seized power in 1947. Phibun established himself as firmly anti-communist and pro-Western.[348] Thailand requested US assistance, and, in the 1950s alone, received approximately $200 million in aid, much of it for the military. In exchange, the Thais proved valuable allies for the US: they recognized the US-backed Bao Dai government in Vietnam, refused to recognize Mao's Communist China, sent troops to Korea and Vietnam, and provided extensive bases for US operations across Southeast Asia.[349]

Military assistance to Thailand formally began on 17 October, 1950.[350] The objective of American military assistance to Thailand was to create internal security, build up Thai forces so they could contribute to regional defense, and slow down an external attack. They also helped develop civil programs to try and prevent a communist insurgency in the first place. Rugged borders, numerous ethnic minorities, and a complacent, politically involved officer corps complicated the mission, according to the MAAG reports.[351]

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[348] Hugh Wilson, "The Best of Friends: Britain, America and Thailand, 1945-1948," *Canadian Journal of History* 25 (1990): 61-83.

[349] McMahon, *The Limits of Empire*, 55 and 96.

[350] "Agreement respecting Military Assistance between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Thailand, 17 October, 1950," *Military Assistance Bilaterals*.

[351] "Military Assistance Plan: Thailand," 1963, USAHEC.

MAAG-Thailand encountered strengths and weaknesses within the Thai armed forces. The advisors believed the country's best asset were its enlisted men, who chief Major General W. N. Gilmore described in 1955 as loyal, brave, and "inured to hardship." They were also politically loyal to the Thai nation and its royal government: "The Thai soldier has little understanding of, interest in, or susceptibility to subversion and the Communist. . . . He has an innate sense of liberty . . . and in general, is a happy-go-lucky, cheerful and religious sort of person with quietly patriotic feelings toward king and country." Furthermore, the advisors encountered numerous junior officers of ability, who provided solid leadership up to the battalion level.[352]

However, problems training and developing Thai senior officers hampered MAAG's efforts at modernizing and improving the Thai armed forces. Gilmore estimated that 80% of colonels and generals "were incompetent and incapable of carrying out their duties." They could not plan operations, coordinate logistics, or lead their forces. Despite defensible terrain, brave enlisted men, and some capable junior officers, the Thais could probably only offer a few weeks of resistance against an invasion. Gilmore argued that these problems at the top slowed training schedules and prevented the development of an effective junior officer corps.[353] The Thais resisted American efforts to train their senior officers to delegate authority, restrict their own personal political activities, and convert to an American system of supply management.

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[352] Major General W.N. Gilmore, "US Joint Military Advisory Group, Thailand: Country Statement," 30 Jun 1955, USAHEC.

[353] Gilmore, "US Joint Military Advisory Group."

In 1958, eight years into American training and assistance, advisor Lieutenant Colonel N. F. Browning believed that that Thai military officers "value their positions first as a political and economic asset."[354] Considering that Thailand's history in the 1940s and 1950s included two coups by military men—by Phibun Songkhram in 1948 and Sarit Thanarat in 1957—it is easier to understand why Thai generals involved themselves in political matters more closely than the Americans thought appropriate, and why they may have preferred a system in which subordinate officers lacked authority to make all but the smallest decisions.

After years of "constant prodding" by MAAG-Thailand, the Thais began to improve in American eyes.[355] In 1955, Gilmore estimated that the Thais could only offer token resistance against an external invasion for about two weeks, had poor logistical capabilities, and only showed tactical competency at the small-unit level.[356] But in 1963, a general summary of assistance argued that the army, navy, and air force all improved from an "ineffective hodge-podge" of antiquated, disorganized units to a "standardized and increasingly effective force." It estimated that the Thais could deal with plausible internal security threats, and could defend themselves from attack by their neighbors (Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia, and Burma). In the case of major attack, from

[354] Lieutenant Colonel N. F. Browning, "US Joint Military Advisory Group, Thailand: Narrative Statement," 30 Jun 1958, USAHEC.

[355] Browning, "US Joint Military Advisory Group."

[356] Gilmore, "US Joint Military Advisory Group."

China or Vietnam, or a large-scale, communist-led insurgency, Thailand could manage until US support arrived. [357]

US aid to Thailand was a diplomatic and strategic boon for the United States. Thailand was a reliable ally in the region and the bases developed there in the 1950s would prove vital during the Vietnam War. Since the beginning of US aid, the Thai armed forces had grown enormously, from 45,000 men in uniform to 120,000. Their forces included new M-41 tanks, modern anti-submarine craft, and new airbases. [358] However, from the perspective of MAAG-Thailand, the mission proved frustrating. The American-perceived problem of overly-political Thai officers never fully resolved, and even after over a decade of aid and support, the advisors still only considered Thailand capable of limited self-defense.

CONCLUSIONS: SLOW DEVELOPMENT, LITTLE AMERICAN ARMIES, AND POLITICAL OFFICERS

Though advisory and assistance missions in the Third World came in a wide range of types—from aid-for-base-rights operations, as in Ethiopia, to full-scale training and modernization programs, as in Turkey—the MAAGs in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia encountered a number of similar conditions. They attempted to train under-educated troops how to use modern equipment; had to improve and/or work around

[357] "Military Assistance Plan: Thailand."

[358] *Ibid.*

weakness in infrastructure, such as narrow mountain roads or tiny airfields; and tried to ingrain in their host armed forces the importance of logistics and maintenance to the American way of war.

In all cases, development of these forces was slower than policy makers had hoped and American advisors on the ground desired. To train armed forces of the Middle East and Asia for modern war, as understood by the Americans, required far more than marksmanship or truck driving. Entire military institutions had to be built up, sometimes from nothing. The MAAGs established schools and arranged training and education for foreign personnel in the United States, both of which took time. As noted in Chapter II, American language skills—limited to English and a few European languages—further slowed training. Only by the end of the 1950s were many of the recipient nations beginning to show improvement, and they still required considerable American support.

Retired General Van Fleet argued that the problem of self-sustaining allied forces in Asia laid with the MAAGs themselves and military assistance policies generally. As detailed earlier, Van Fleet's 1954 fact-finding mission in Asia examined assistance missions throughout the region. In addition to his specific comments on Japan, Taiwan, and Korea, he found overall that:

> To a large extent, the indigenous ground forces of the area are being developed in the US image. [This] fails to evaluate the national character, customs, and prevailing socio-economic structure as such countries as China and Korea. In a military sense, the average Asian male has the attributes of easy accommodation to and great staying power under, extremes of privation; remarkable foot mobility even with heavy load; and unquestioning obedience to trusted leaders. His shortcomings include lack of mechanical skill, low level of formal education and

> bewilderment by rapid change. The design of native forces must be such as to maximize on the individual's attributes while reducing the impact of his shortcomings. This is not the rationale governing the operations of the various MAAGs and as a consequence the end product is likely to be a costly and ineffectual imitation increasingly dependent on the US, rather than a genuinely native force of progressively developing effectiveness and independence.[359]

Van Fleet was not alone in this criticism of assistance and the MAAGs' behavior. Many advisors, writing later as students at the Army War College, expressed concerns for how advisory and assistance missions operated, the clarity of their objectives, and what they actually achieved. Liutenant Colonel Elmer E. Twining warned against the habit of creating mirror forces in allied nations. He acknowledged, though, that the speed with which the US set up advisory missions, the fear of possible communist assault, and the natural tendency of the American advisors all led to the creation of little American armies.[360] Colonel George D. Patterson, writing in 1955, advised that the US only provide more assistance to those allies with proven ability to use it, and warned that the US not rely too much on its assistance-supported allies in the event of a ground war.[361]

Colonel John D. Hickey, writing about military aid generally and in the Middle East specifically, believed the US spent assistance money and conducted advisory missions "without any definite measuring stick as to the value or benefit that the United

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[359] Van Fleet, "Preliminary Report of Mission to the Far East (Japan, Korea, Okinawa, and Formosa," 3 Jun 1954, F Van Fleet Mission-Correspondence 2 Jun 1954-15 Jun 1954, Box 102, Entry 127, Van Fleet Papers, Marshall Library.

[360] Twining, "Development of Long-Range."

[361] Patterson, "Mutual Defense Assistance."

States is receiving for the dollars invested." As Van Fleet worried that the assistance missions in Asia worked independently, without a coherent plan, Hickey had similar concerns for the Middle East. He asked hard questions: did Middle Eastern recipients of aid have the "Ability to continue independence and territorial integrity, identification with the Free World, and will and ability to resist communist invasion, subversion and pressures . . . What effect does the presence of groups of American military and civilians have on the national political leaders, leaders of opinion and the population in general? What effect does the materiel and training program have on the population?"[362] The problem of creating "little American armies" rather than forces suited to the host nations was repeated around the world, especially in developing countries which lacked the infrastructure to support such forces. The advisors' habit to train what they knew, and the assistance program's habit of foisting advanced equipment onto allied forces unready to use it, undermined much of the advisory and assistance mission.

MAAG advisors were also frustrated that there was very little division between domestic politics and military affairs in the developing world, and criticized their host nations for choosing officers for political loyalty rather than military ability. John Throckmorton, a former advisor, wrote that political intrigue in Asian nations was "vexatious and frustrating."[363] Advisors in Thailand lamented over corrupt generals who slowed training, and MAAG-Ethiopia worried that host commanders threatened their own national defense as they sought to maintain their fiefdoms. The advisors, as a

[362] Hickey, "Evaluation of Military Aid."

[363] Throckmorton, "Formation and Training of Allied Asiatic Armies."

whole, worried that officers who cared more about their political connections and personal advancement than their jobs as soldiers weakened the defenses of those developing nations US policy makers wanted to protect.

However, US policy makers valued many of these nations for their dictatorial leadership, seen then as important against communist influence. These dictators based much of their power on their armed forces, which made their officers' political loyalty vital. Therefore, well connected generals and officers—though perhaps undesirable from a military standpoint—were unavoidable and in a way contributed to US and Western security, as far as policymakers were concerned.

Advisors themselves often sometimes admitted this. MAAG reports openly acknowledged the political loyalty of the Iranian, Libyan, Ethiopian, and Thai officers and generals. American officers explicitly argued for the importance of maintaining military-supported governments in the developing world, out of fear that weak, fledgling democracies could not support themselves in face of communist pressure. Major Grady Smallwood, in 1964, considered the military's political role important in the Middle East and argued that MAAG Chiefs in those countries needed to take an active role influencing those leaders.[364] Hickey warned that the danger of a military coup in Iran could only be removed by better management and indoctrination of the armed forces.[365] The military world was also the political world in many developing nations. MAAG missions missed this mark.

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[364] Grady Smallwood, "The Principal Leadership Problems Confronting The Chief Of A Military Assistance Advisory Group And Some Solutions For Selected Problems," (MA Thesis, CGSC, 1964).

[365] Hickey, "Evaluation of Military Aid."

Military assistance and advising did gain the US support and allies in the developing world. Turkey, Iran, Libya, and Ethiopia all granted base and airspace rights to the US. In global affairs, American politicians and strategists could point to the many recipients of aid and declare them members of the Free World, standing with the US against communism. These nations sometimes provided very real political support, as in Thailand. It confirmed Chester Pach's theory that the existence of military assistance was more important than the uses to which it was put. In the long term, though, the use of military assistance as a way to buy political alliances can also be seen as problematic. Military coups continued in Turkey and Thailand. Ethiopia's military took over that country in 1975, murdered Haile Selassie, accepted military aid from the Soviet Union, and went to war with neighboring Somalia. A nationalistic and religious movement in Iran ousted the Shah and froze relations with the US.[366]

From a military standpoint, the biggest, most expensive advisory and assistance missions in the third world created American-style armed forces unable to support themselves without US support because those nations lacked the infrastructure, industrial capabilities, and finances to do so—regardless of the amount of training they received. Some American advisors, Van Fleet included, understood this problem. It was not something that could be solved quickly. Nevertheless, the MAAGs continued their emphasis on creating mirror armed forces. There was some suggestion that such an approach worked, after all—the ROKA ultimately proved a capable force—and the conventional invasion of Korea colored American perceptions. The allure of having

[366] Westad, *Global Cold War*, 257-289.

local forces fight advancing communism was powerful. The next chapter examines this strategy in Vietnam.

CHAPTER V

ADVISORS IN VIETNAM

Assistance to French Indochina and Vietnam was the least successful of US aid missions during the Cold War. After spending billions of dollars and hundreds of American lives to shore up France's war in Vietnam and then support the ineffective South Vietnamese government, the US deployed massive American ground forces into the region, exactly what military assistance and advising was supposed to prevent.

This chapter examines the changing role of American advisors in Vietnam, beginning with the First Indochina War (1946-1954), when MAAG Indochina was primarily a logistical organization, overseeing the shipment of material aid to the French forces fighting the Viet Minh. It then examines the US advisory and assistance mission to the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) and the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN). It shows that from 1950 nearly through to the introduction of US combat forces in 1965, the American advisors were highly optimistic of first France, and then the Republic of Vietnam's, ability to defeat communist and nationalist forces in Vietnam. The MAAG's habits and opinions reflected the general attitude of advisory missions around the world. The advisors believed that the application of American know-how and material aid could overcome almost any obstacle. They focused on logistical management and training allied troops to fight more like Americans, with heavy mechanized forces and advanced weaponry.

The long saga of American involvement in the region featured an advisory and assistance aspect for almost entire length. It began in 1950 with formal support of the French war, and ended in 1975 as Democratic Republic of Vietnam forces seized Saigon. The US-Vietnamese period, from 1955 to the end of the war, is well documented by a number of works, most of which agree that the US advisory mission suffered from a number of key problems. The advisors, overwhelmingly from the army, trained the Vietnamese to fight what historian Andrew Krepinevich called the "Army Concept." This emphasized large maneuver units, trained and equipped for conventional battles against an invading North Vietnamese force. The American advisors paid little attention to counterinsurgency. Furthermore, MAAG's leaders and senior advisors were clouded by an abundance of optimism, believing that enough US materiel and training would solve the South Vietnamese military problems. The advisors, mostly working in short tours of duty, without specialized training in advising, counter insurgency, or Vietnamese language, culture, and history, in large part remained positive about the grim military situation in Vietnam. Lastly, Vietnam's government, under President Ngo Dinh Diem, was inefficient, corrupt, and lacked legitimacy. These problems trickled down into the military, whose senior leadership involved itself heavily in Vietnamese politics.[1]

The historiography's argument about US advising in Vietnam—that it inadequately prepared a dysfunctional army, from a dysfunctional nation, to fight the

[1] Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); John Prados, *Vietnam: The History of an Unwinnable War, 1945-1975* (Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, 2009); and Spector, *Advice and Support*.

wrong kind of war—can also be applied to the US experience in French Indochina, in the years before the US took the lead in the region.

FRENCH-INDOCHINA

MAAG-Indochina had one of the most complex advisory missions of the Cold War. It dealt with an active war, difficult French allies, and Vietnamese allies who almost totally lacked an established military tradition and infrastructure. Their mission was mainly one of logistics and observation, but laid the groundwork for later American involvement. MAAG personnel found much about the French effort to criticize, but were confident of French victory, right up until France's defeat at Dien Bien Phu. The advisors would express similar optimism in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when they directly advised the South Vietnamese forces.

When the United States began supplying France with military aid, the French had already been fighting a vicious colonial war in Indochina for almost four years. The detonation of a Soviet atomic weapon, the "fall" of China to Mao Zedong, and the communist invasion of South Korea led the United States to involve itself in the region. The military and diplomatic situation in Europe also influenced American decision making in Southeast Asia. US policy makers believed that Western European security hinged upon major French involvement in NATO, and they worried that the French effort in Indochina threatened their commitments to European defense. American supplies and equipment helped the French maintain a stalemate against the Viet Minh,

but could not alone defeat them. When France suffered a devastating defeat at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, they finally went to the negotiating table, granting Laos, Cambodia, and North Vietnam independence.[2]

The United States' military mission in Indochina began with 70 men of all ranks in September 1950, and grew to 342 by the post-Dien Bien Phu ceasefire in 1954.[3] Command of MAAG belonged to a series of army generals, as the bulk of support sent to Vietnam in the 1950s went to ground forces. MAAG chiefs reported to the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific (CINCPAC), who was under the direction of the Department of the Navy.[4] MAAG's reports were distributed to the Department of Defense, the US ambassador to Vietnam, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and others. MAAG's mission in Indochina was to monitor the flow of MDAP-supplied US equipment, and to make sure that the equipment was used correctly by the French. They assisted the French with specialist personnel and studied French logistical and combat operations, documenting their observations with monthly activity reports, estimates of French combat effectiveness, and MAAG operational notes.

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[2] Thomas Anderson, *The Columbia Guide to the Vietnam War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002)*;* Jacques Dalloz, *The War in Indo-China, 1945-54* (Savage, MD: Barnes and Noble Ltd, 1990); William J. Duiker, *U.S. Containment Policy and the Conflict in Indochina* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994); Bernard B. Fall, *Street Without Joy: The French Debacle in Indochina* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1994); Mark Atwood Lawrence, *Assuming the Burden*; and Statler, *Replacing France*.

[3] "U.S. Military Aid for France in Indochina," Box 05, Unit 13: The Douglas Pike Collection, the Vietnam Archive, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX (hereafter Vietnam Archive).

[4] George S. Eckardt, *Vietnam Studies: Command and Control, 1950-1969* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1973), 7-10.

The greater American objective, however, was to foster the creation of a stable, independent Vietnam, free of French colonial influence, and the development of armed forces capable of supporting that country. This obviously contradicted the French objective of retaining their colony. The French remained adamantly opposed to US advisors training the Vietnamese during the war, relenting only after the defeat at Dien Bien Phu.[5] Thus, MAAG's work in Indochina focused on the French, and only indirectly on their subordinate Indochinese forces.

The French forces in Indochina were overstretched, undermanned, and, even with American resources, underequipped. The army numbered around 400,000 men, most of those in static garrisons and of unreliable quality. The air force, with about 8,000 trained personnel, could deploy approximately 300 aircraft of all types; most were used to either ferry paratroopers and resupply units from the air, or for ground attack missions. The French navy in Indochina used several light carriers and surface ships for "blue water" missions, but mainly focused on riverine operations. Strict laws governed the use of conscripts overseas and severely limited France's available manpower, especially in the technically oriented air force. This obliged them to rely upon dwindling numbers of career soldiers, colonial troops, and local labor and conscripts.[6] The US observed, advised and managed military aid for all three branches of the French and Vietnamese forces in Indochina—the army, navy, and air force.

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[5] Spector, *Advice and Support*, 221.

[6] Martin Windrow, *The Last Valley: Dien Bien Phu and the French Defeat in Vietnam* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2004).

The US army's reports on the French army's performance in Indochina centered on French combat abilities and assessments of the French strategic position. American personnel wrote with a tone of guarded optimism. They frequently praised the combat abilities of French combat units (including colonial battalions from Africa) and found France's employment of American-provided equipment in Indochina acceptable. However, MAAG's Army representatives questioned the effectiveness of France's Indochinese allies, French strategic deployment, and what Americans described as a lack of offensive spirit in the French high command. Overall, US Army personnel considered France's ground forces as strong as difficult conditions allowed, and attributed much of their success to the influx of US logistical support.

The French Army employed a combined-arms force in Indochina, with infantry, artillery, engineering, and armored units throughout the theater.[7] In addition to metropolitan French and native Indochinese troops (Cambodians, Laotians, Vietnamese, and Montagnards), France also used many of its colonial forces, especially from Africa. "French" units included metropolitan troops (many of them parachute, mechanized, or artillery) as well as France's colonial troops. In fact, US Army reports labeled many units "French", if such distinction was unclear, as it may have been for many of the African units. To confuse matters further, most "French" units in Indochina included large numbers of Indochinese, serving as either replacements for casualties or as non-combat support personnel. The Indochinese (Laotian, Cambodian, and Vietnamese

[7] "Field Estimate of Effectiveness of French Union Forces," 23 Jan 1953, F MAAGV 370.2 Operations and Reports, Military Assistance Advisory Group Vietnam (hereafter MAAG V), Box 1, E HM 1996, RG 472 NARA.

troops) did field some excellent units, including several crack parachute battalions, but most performed poorly.

MAAG's army section consisted of around fifteen officers and forty enlisted men.[8] This small team faced some daunting assignments. They had to observe and grade French units in the field, spread over the huge square mileage of the Red River Delta and the Tonkinese and Central Highlands. The army consumed the lion's share of the overall US support.[9] The vast quantities of various American materiel arriving in-country included such items as wheeled vehicles, halftracks, tanks, machine guns, artillery, field rations, uniforms, and parachutes, and MAAG had to catalog it all.[10] Though most of the US equipment was of World War II vintage, it remained serviceable and effective.[11]

MAAG's army personnel held high opinions of French units and personnel, especially the officers. The average French officer, up to the level of battalion, was "excellent," with "a great deal of personal courage." Many French officers served multiple tours in Indochina. The French handled their US-issued equipment well. The vast majority of inspections found equipment in "satisfactory" or better condition despite

[8] For example, in January 1953: sixteen officers, one warrant officer, and 38 enlisted men.

[9] "Field Estimate of Effectiveness of French Union Forces," 6 Feb 1952, MAAG V, Box 1, E HM 1996, RG 472, NARA. In early 1952, the French Army consisted of 420,000 troops in the field. In the same year, there were 12,000 men in the Navy in Indochina, and 7,440 trained personnel in the Air Force.

[10] "Field Estimate of Effectiveness," 6 Feb 1952. By February 1952, , the US had delivered to the French army 418 combat vehicles (primarily halftracks, armored cars, and light tanks), 3,488 transport vehicles (trucks and jeeps), 7,783 automatic weapons, 3,527 radios, nearly 800,000 artillery shells, and 18,000,000 rounds of small arms ammunition.

[11] With the exception of dry cell battery and some ammunition problems, MAAG personnel rarely reported any troubles for the American equipment in French Indochina.

"continuous and hard service."[12] Though the French units did not always maintain their weapons and gear to levels that the Americans wanted, that equipment nevertheless "enabled [the French] to perform their assigned missions in an excellent manner." [13]

The Indochinese contingent of the French army did not fare so well in American eyes. Colonel Norman Williams, Chief of MAAG's Army Section in March 1953, note that one battalion's equipment was "falling far below the desired standard." He cited rusty and dirty mortar barrels and unserviceable vehicles. [14] Perhaps most damning of these reports criticized the 6th Vietnamese Infantry Battalion, stationed outside Hanoi. In "bad shape," the unit had not even begun routine maintenance on their weapons, despite an impending operation against the Viet Minh. The list of deficiencies continued:

> . . . the Battalion Commander had not inspected nor was he familiar with the condition of his equipment, and offered numerous invalid excuses for his negligence; neither the Sub-Sector or Zone Commander, nor their representatives had at any time conducted any inspection of this unit; the majority of the personnel were sleeping or resting on the day of inspection . . . Battalion, Sub-Sector, and Zone Commanders, without exception, attempted to excuse condition of the equipment and steadfastly maintained that the 6th Battalion was one of the best in the Vietnamese National Army. [15]

Though the Americans did not judge all Indochinese units so harshly (holding several artillery and parachute battalions and some Cambodian units in high regard),

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[12] "MAAG Monthly Activity Report: December 1952," 23 Jan 1953, MAAG-V, Box 1, E A1 9, RG 472, NARA.

[13] "MAAG Monthly Activity Report: April 1953," 20 May 1953, MAAG-V, Box 1, E A1 9, RG 472, NARA.

[14] "MAAG Monthly Activity Report: March 1953," 25 Apr 1953, MAAG-V, Box 1, E A1 9, RG 472, NARA.

[15] "MAAG Monthly Activity Report: December 1953," MAAG-V, Box 1, E A1 9, RG 472, NARA.

they did see several key problems as systemic in the Indochinese forces. Unlike French troops, who trained before deployment to Indochina, Indochinese soldiers did much of their training after they were assigned to their unit, an uneven system at best. These units also fought in active operations as they tried to train, adding to their difficulties. Indochinese officers lacked field experience and the French excluded them from the higher echelons of command in Indochina. The problems did not always arise from the quality of the officers themselves; MAAG observers noted many capable company commanders. Some were well trained by the capable French commissioned and noncommissioned officers who staffed an in-country officer school, but generally Americans criticized the French for their training of Indochinese officers. There were few Indochinese above the rank of major and they rarely held staff positions. The lack of Indochinese officers in the French high command meant that, though the Americans urged the French to allow the Indochinese greater military autonomy, those forces could not function in the field without the French directly supporting and leading them. The Americans worried that, with so little experience in leading themselves in major operations, the Vietnamese might be incapable of doing so if they ever gained control of their own army. [16] These problems would follow the Vietnamese forces for the next two decades, haunting them from the French war until the final 1975 communist offensive that seized Saigon.

Beyond the shortcomings of the Indochinese forces, American complained about the French logistical system. Ammunition storage facilities were often deficient, and

[16] "Field Estimate of Effectiveness," 23 January 1953.

due to manpower shortages, "coolies" and communist prisoners handled ammunition, instead of qualified soldiers.[17] "By U. S. standards," another report read, the French supply system "is slow and inefficient."[18] Indochinese terrain also hampered French logistics. Flooding in Tonkin made it difficult to waterproof ammunition dumps, and the primitive transportation system damaged many vehicles. French vehicles quickly wore out their shock absorbers due to rough road conditions.[19] Rough dirt roads were barely wide enough for one way traffic.[20]

Army observers also disapproved of French strategic deployment. In order to cover the considerable land area of Indochina, the French subdivided their units and dispersed them throughout the countryside. Battalions split into company- and platoon-sized posts, and rarely operated as whole units. The Americans urged French commanders to concentrate their forces into regimental, brigade, and division-sized units.[21] In addition to dispersed deployment, the Americans criticized the *ad hoc* battle groups favored by the French. "[Organization] is an outstanding weakness of the French Union forces in Indochina," said one report. French commanders organized their units "to fit a situation rather than organized as standard type units and then tailored to fit the

[17] "MAAG Monthly Activity Report: December 1953."

[18] "Field Estimate of Effectiveness," 23 January 1953.

[19] "MAAG Monthly Activity Report: December 1953."

[20] "MAAG Monthly Activity Report: May 1953," 19 Jun 1953, MAAG-V, Box 1, E A1 9, RG 472, NARA.

[21] "MAAG Monthly Activity Report: May 1953."

situation."[22] How different an *ad hoc* unit was from a "standard type unit tailored to fit the situation" is unclear.

The army observers further perceived a lack of aggressiveness in the French high command. The Americans saw the French as trapped in "defensive strong points," where they waited for battle instead going out into the bush to destroy the Viet Minh.[23] The Americans believed that French and Indochinese morale could only hold for so long, and that launching a significant offensive could improve morale.[24]

Many army observers argued that the French held on because of the equipment granted to them by the United States. Large quantities of American-supplied radios and telephones, wrote one MAAG observer, "has improved combat control." Despite the famous defeats of French motorized groups in the highlands of Vietnam, this same summary praised the new vehicles available for the French as having improved their operational mobility. All this, the Americans hoped, improved French morale.[25] Furthermore, French and Indochinese maintenance discipline improved, as the Americans saw it, because of the "salutary effect of the MAAG inspections."[26] Though they criticized the French army's logistics and strategy, their overall view reflected the

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[22] Ibid.

[23] "MAAG Monthly Activity Report: December 1953."

[24] "Field Estimate of Effectiveness," 23 January 1953.

[25] "Field Estimate of Effectiveness," 6 Feb 1952.

[26] "Memorandum for the Counselor, American Legation, Sai-Gon, Viet-Nam," 10 Nov 1950, F MAAGV 400.1 Supplies, Services, and Equipment, MAAG-V, Box 1, E HM 1996, RG 472, NARA.

symbolic argument for military assistance described by Pach.[27] The US Air Force and Navy, however, came to less positive conclusions than their Army colleagues.

MAAG's air force and navy personnel held, with exceptions, negative views of France's small air force and navy (FAF and FRN, respectively) in Indochina. The air force section of MAAG endlessly repeated their grievances against how the FAF's low logistical standards affected its combat value, and that its officers resisted American maintenance methods. Commitments to NATO and draftee laws limited the FAF's personnel strength in Indochina.[28] In February 1952, it fielded 7,440 air force personnel, 303 of them pilots; it remained at approximately this strength for the duration of the war.[29] The FAF made wide use of indigenous personnel to act as guards and general labor on their airbases, but these personnel had no technical qualifications, and could not contribute to the FAF's severe shortage of maintenance personnel. Because of the FAF's limited manpower, they could only put a small number of planes into the air at any given time, regardless of how many fighters, bombers, and transport aircraft the United States provided them.[30]

The air force section deplored French maintenance standards and logistical practices. FAF's maintenance was "lax and disorderly" in comparison to the USAF.[31]

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[27] Pach, *Arming the Free World*, 230.

[28] Windrow, *The Last Valley*, 171-172.

[29] "Field Estimate of Effectiveness of French Union Forces," 6 Feb 1952.

[30] Windrow, *The Last Valley*, 268-272.

[31] "MAAG Monthly Activity Report: December 1955," 10 Jan 1956, MAAG-V, Box 2, E A1 9, RG 472, NARA.

A 1953 Monthly Activity Report included a litany of criticisms for the French, citing ammunition storage issues at a FAF base. The French neither stacked ammunition properly nor provided it with dunnage, stored it too close to other structures, and did not provide the facilities with adequate drainage. USAF personnel witnessed ground crews carelessly handle bombs.[32] These issues all stemmed from the MAAG's belief that the French followed inferior maintenance standards, which were "cumbersome, antiquated, and overextended through decentralization."[33] One estimate found that the French managed about twenty-five flight hours per month per aircraft. The USAF, with similar types of aircraft, could manage seventy five hours.[34]

Americans attributed some of the problem to French attitudes, often lamenting that the French resisted American training and maintenance methods. A frustrated airman in 1955 wrote, "The problem is summarized simply: Fully qualified MAAG representatives say to the French, 'We believe you can repair with your existing facilities and manpower items that have not been attempted.' The French may say, 'No, we can't.' An impasse immediately arises."[35] American personnel were not shy in laying the blame, either. A 1953 document considered that the problems of the FAF, especially those of a logistical nature, were attributable to a "lack of aggressive attitudes to correct

[32] "MAAG Monthly Activity Report: December 1953." Dunnage is any type of inert, shock-absorbing material used to protect ammunition from accidental detonation and wear and tear.

[33] "MAAG Monthly Activity Report: September 1954," 15 Oct 1954, Box 2, E A1 9, RG 472, NARA.

[34] "MAAG Monthly Activity Report: December 1952," 23 Jan 1953.

[35] "MAAG Monthly Activity Report: February 1955," 15 Mar 1955, MAAG-V, Box 2, E A1 9, RG 472, NARA.

[administrative] malpractices."[36] A January 1954 report used almost the same phrasing to describe the problem, saying that a "lack of an aggressive attitude to correct their malpractices . . . has a terrific bearing on supply support problems."[37]

After the negotiations that followed the Viet Minh's crushing victory at Dien Bien Phu in spring of 1954, the FAF's slip-shod maintenance and supply system collapsed. The United States had terminated its support of French operations in Indochina in July 1954 as a result of the ceasefire agreement. The lack of fresh aircraft and replacement parts combined with the logistical problems observers had long documented and American personnel declared that the FAF had a "complete breakdown of combat capabilities" and worried, if fighting broke out again, the French would be unable to hold their positions.[38]

The USAF also criticized the FAF's tactical shortcomings. Though the FAF performed ground-attack, reconnaissance, and airborne operations as well as they could with their limited resources, a USAF writer remarked in January 1954 that France's lack of air defense could be disastrous if enemy air forces attacked.[39] Another report, in 1953, warned that the French pilots had minimal training in air-to-air combat.[40] Such

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[36] "Field Estimate of Effectiveness," 23 January 1953.

[37] "MAAG Monthly Activity Report: January 1954," 20 Feb, 1954, Box 1, MAAG-V, Entry A1 9, RG 472, NARA.

[38] "MAAG Monthly Activity Report: August 1954," 15 Sep 1954, MAAG-V, Box 2, Entry A1 9, RG 472, NARA.

[39] "MAAG Monthly Activity Report: January 1954."

[40] "Field Estimate of Effectiveness," 23 Jan 1953.

comments reflected American military planners' concerns about Communist Chinese and Soviet intervention in Indochina, as had happened in Korea in 1950. Even without an enemy air force to oppose them, USAF personnel observed in January 1954 that the FAF's losses were "not exactly at a minimum." The French had lost fifty two of their 182 F-8F fighters and ten of their fifty five B-26s, a loss rate (from all causes) of 26 percent of MDAP-supplied combat aircraft.[41] Maintenance failures and Viet Minh ground fire caused considerable damage to the FAF.

The FAF's manpower shortages also worried the MAAG. Though the entire French war effort starved for manpower, the technical skill requirements of the air force made it especially understrength. Almost every advisory document mentioned FAF manpower shortages. As early as November 1950, a USAF observer considered the FAF's dearth of mechanics and logisticians their "most hampering factor."[42] By 1953, MAAG believed "lack of personnel within the French Air Force in Indo-China" was *the* obstacle to improving the FAF.[43] Without more technicians and other well-trained support personnel, "relief from this situation" of logistical woes was impossible.[44]

The USAF's assessment was well summarized by a January 1954 report: "Lack of trained personnel, inability to formulate long-range logistics and operational plans,

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[41] "MAAG Monthly Activity Report: January 1954."

[42] "Memorandum for the Counselor." Such was the shortage of French FAF personnel that their more qualified men had to perform non-technical tasks; the author of the document added that his French driver was a FAF Sergeant and a mechanic.

[43] "MAAG Monthly Activity Report: April 1953."

[44] "MAAG Monthly Activity Report: January 1954."

plus continued utilization of obsolescent accounting and maintenance procedures, contribute to the reduced effectiveness of the French Air Force which no amount of logistic support can overcome."[45] These problems made French air bases disorganized and unkempt, their aircraft run ragged, and left ground forces without reliable support and resupply from the air.

The American airmen also presented some contradictory observations, however. For example, a 1954 USAF report praised the FAF for turning the "tide of battle," despite months of previous reports which criticized the French on a wide variety of issues.[46] With all their new equipment, issued by the Americans, the FAF had turned "the tide of battle with timely air support and continued interdiction of enemy supply routes."[47] A January 1954 report stated that American aircraft and supplies converted the FAF "from a weak, ineffectual force into a semi-modern air arm" that performed its duties well.[48] At times, the MAAG simultaneously criticized the FAF for heavy losses and maintenance and praised it for turning "the tide of battle with timely air support."[49]

The navy personnel of MAAG contributed much less material to MAAG's documents than did those of the army and air force. What the navy did report was mixed. They praised the French riverine forces, but criticized French maintenance of

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[45] "MAAG Monthly Activity Report: January 1954."

[46] "MAAG Monthly Activity Report: January 1954."

[47] "Field Estimate of Effectiveness of French Union Forces," 6 Feb 1952.

[48] "MAAG Monthly Activity Report: January 1954."

[49] "Field Estimate of Effectiveness of French Union Forces," 6 Feb 1952.

ships and facilities. The quality of France's blue water forces also disappointed the MAAG.

The French navy's (FRN) conducted riverine operations against the Viet Minh and in support of various French outposts, and interdicted Viet Minh attempts to move supplies from China by sea to various points along the Indochinese coast. The French also operated several small aircraft carriers during the war.[50] To achieve its objectives, the FRN had 12,000 men, including unskilled, indigenous laborers. French naval personnel served for eighteen month tours.[51] Primarily, the FRN deployed vessels suitable for riverine operations, such as World War II landing ships. With these craft they formed the *Dinassaut* units, detachments of shallow-bottomed craft which patrolled Indochina's many inland waterways and conducted amphibious attacks and hit-and-run missions. French combat operations near the coast could take advantage of fire support from their handful of surface ships. In addition, the FRN operated aircraft from coastal bases. The United States provided them with the vast majority of their boats, ships, and aircraft.

MAAG's USN evaluators gave considerable praise to France's riverine operations. Two thirds of France's navy personnel were "khaki navy" (by American terminology, "brown water").[52] Vietnam's massive Mekong and Red River deltas were

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[50] Charles W. Koburger, Jr., *The French Navy in Indochina: Riverine and Coastal Forces, 1945-54* (New York: Praeger, 1991), 29.

[51] "Field Estimate of Effectiveness of French Union Forces," 6 Feb 1952, and Koburger, *The French Navy*, 36.

[52] Koburger, *The French Navy*, 38. Rather than "blue water," the French referred to their ocean-going forces as "white navy."

well suited to riverine operations. France deployed their forces to these inland waterways to deny their use to the Viet Minh and to keep them open for French traffic.[53] France's khaki navy executed numerous successful riverine attacks during the war.[54] The presence of these riverine forces, described one Navy report, made Vietnam's rivers "safe in all areas occupied by friendly forces."[55] Another document reviewed the French as "probably better qualified by experience and equipment than any other naval force for the particular type of river warfare which confronts it in Indochina."[56] As well as combat operations, they performed an important logistical function on the rivers, when the Viet Minh or terrain made overland supply delivery impossible. One Navy writer described the task as "a constant and heavy undertaking which they accomplish with facility."[57] Of all the reviews made by MAAG observers, these assessments of France's khaki navy were the best.

The Americans did not have strong praise for the French blue water "white navy." Overall, American observers found French ships functional, but "their long-term maintenance procedures are found to be deficient."[58] The Americans ranked several ships visited in July 1954 as serviceable, but remarked upon "dirty and unkempt" crew

[53] Richard L. Schreadley, *From the Rivers to the Sea: The United States Navy in Vietnam* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1992), 20-22.

[54] Koburger, *The French Navy,* 43-44.

[55] "Field Estimate of Effectiveness," 6 Feb 1952.

[56] "Field Estimate of Effectiveness," 23 Jan 1953.

[57] "Indo-China Country Statement for Presentation of the 1955 MDA Program," 26 Jan 1954, F MAAGV 092 Indo-China Country Statement, MAAG-V, Box 2, E HM 1996, RG 472, NARA.

[58] "Field Estimate of Effectiveness," 23 Jan 1953.

quarters and filthy engine bilges.[59] Some French ships received fine reviews from the Americans, but most reports emphasized substandard French maintenance.[60] They also believed the French forces were poorly trained for "orthodox naval warfare" and were vulnerable to submarines.[61] Though the Viet Minh did not have any submarines to capitalize on this weakness, American planners worried that should the Soviets enter the war, their own submarine forces could wreak havoc on the French.

Unlike the army, both the air force and navy advisors expressed concern over France's ability to resist a conventional, external attack on Indochina. They appear to have envisioned a scenario similar to the Chinese intervention in Korea. This concern of large scale Chinese intervention helps explain why USAF personnel so criticized the French. Despite their admissions that the French fliers could carry out their support duties in "an acceptable manner," they may have worried that the FAF was only a single Sino-Soviet intervention away from total destruction. But why the USAF and USN observers focused on such concerns, while army observers did not, is unclear, since the army focused so strongly on building a Vietnamese army in the 1950s capable of resisting a conventional invasion.

The MAAG personnel agreed that the French were logistically inefficient and paid too little attention to training their Indochinese allies. But overall, MAAG's official tone was neutral toward the French, and sometimes even complimentary. The

[59] "MAAG Monthly Activity Report: August 1954."

[60] "MAAG Monthly Activity Report: December 1952."

[61] "Indo-China Country Statement."

summarizing section of any given MAAG report emphasized the positive effect had by US provided equipment and supplies and the status of the materiel. These summaries tended to lean toward the army's positive assessment of the French rather than the more critical air force and navy perspectives. In some ways, the assessments conveyed an optimistic view of the war in Indochina that individual observers may not have shared. They disregarded the poor positions of the French and condemnatory reports and instead focused on the positive effects of American support, and the need for continued resistance against communist expansion in Asia.

MAAG reports emphasized improvement in French handling of US materiel and the positive effect this materiel had on the war effort. Though the French did not always maintain equipment to high American standards, it was at least maintained in an "acceptable manner."[62] This adequately-maintained equipment had, according to MAAG, immensely benefited the French forces in the field.[63] This positive attitude reached an unrealistic peak in in January 1954, when a US observer stated, ". . . it is considered that the French Union forces have the capability of destroying the Viet Minh in the next few years."[64] In May and June of that year, the Viet Minh annihilated many of the best units in the French army, and peace negotiations commenced at Geneva.

Some reports by MAAG personnel blatantly ignored the complaints of non-Army members of the group. For example, after his departure from Indochina in April 1954,

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[62] "MAAG Monthly Activity Report: April 1953."

[63] "MAAG Monthly Activity Report: March 1953."

[64] "Indo-China Country Statement."

former-MAAG Chief Major General Thomas J. H. Trapnell wrote that American materiel given to the French air force "has converted it into a modern air arm capable of performing its combat mission in a highly satisfactory manner. It is an effective offensive or defensive combat weapon, the full potential of which has not been realized."[65] Trapnell gave this report after years of negative USAF reports, and only shortly before the FAF's post-ceasefire collapse, which many air force advisors had anticipated.

That MAAG's reports tended to reflect the army's view of the French not surprising, considering the overwhelming majority of materiel the US sent to Indochina was intended for ground forces. Because of France's limited resources, much of the war depended upon the operations of French and French-allied army units. These units, patrolling the swamps, jungles and mountains, decided France's war in Indochina. Their success in rooting out Viet Minh troops, so it seemed, would determine the course of the war. Furthermore, MAAG chiefs were all army generals, who may have consciously or unconsciously believed army reports more than others.

MAAG report summaries painted an unrealistically optimistic image of the war in Indochina, focusing as they did on successful shipments of US supplies, weapons, and equipment. They could be criticized for this assessment, but it must be remembered that MAAG-Indochina operated under difficult conditions. Their small size meant tremendous workloads, and thus limited available time per soldier, airman, and sailor.

[65] Major General Thomas J. H. Trapnell, "Former Chief of MAAG, Indochina Comments in his Debriefing on the French Situation in Indochina," 3 May 1954, Box 03, Unit 13, Pike Collection, Vietnam War Archive.

They used their resources to focus on their primary mission, to process and monitor US materiel provided to the French.

Anti-communism, and the assumption that communist nations around the world served Moscow, appeared in MAAG writings. General Trapnell, in his debriefing after command passed to General John W. O'Daniel, hoped French Indochina would "occupy a blocking position against the expansion of Chinese Communist influence" into Southeast Asia, fearing that if the communists were successful there, Burma, Malaya, and Thailand would surely fall, followed in time by India, Ceylon, Pakistan, Indonesia, the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand. He added that "as in Korea, Iran, Malaya, and Burma, the war in Indochina is not a separate entity. It is another tentacle of the octopus, another brush fire on the periphery of the iron and bamboo curtains. The problem can only be solved completely if the masters of the Kremlin decide that Indochina should be abandoned in favor of more profitable enterprises elsewhere."[66]

MAAG's assessment of the French tied in neatly to the prevailing sentiments of US military aid—that its use could prevent communist expansion around the world, and that the very presence of military aid was enough to ensure success, without regard to how it was put to use. The Monthly Activity Reports, field estimates of effectiveness, and other documents cannot be used alone to understand the French Indochina War. Reports from March, April, May, and June 1954 barely mention the fighting at Dien Bien Phu. The July 1954 report announced blandly that "This month's activities feature

[66] Trapnell, "Former Chief of MAAG."

a cease fire agreement."[67] Very little of the war's desperation can be seen in the MAAG documents. To MAAG, the war was a matter of cataloging materiel delivered, training visits, and equipment inspections. What the men in MAAG wanted in Indochina can be seen through their reports, an optimistic "can-do" attitude that the communists, through application of American materiel and logistical might, could be stopped. After the cease fire, Lieutenant General Samuel T. Williams, then MAAG chief, spoke at a monthly advisor's conference. His tone was positive. "All of us, regardless of trials and tribulations, frustration, and at times discouragement, must maintain an optimistic view point . . . We Americans and French have time to be anti-communist, only."[68]

REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

After France's defeat and subsequent withdrawal from Indochina, the United States took on South Vietnam as client and ally. The Americans believed they could quickly whip the Vietnamese into shape and defeat any subsequent attack by their communist enemies in the north. The Americans first attempted to cooperate with the departing French, through 1956. The advisors then shifted to training the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces alone, developing them as a conventional force to fight a full scale invasion by the North Vietnamese. Finally, from 1961 to 1963, the MAAG

[67] "MAAG Monthly Activity Report: July 1954," 15 Aug 1954, MAAG-V, Box 1, E A1-9, RG 472, NARA.

[68] "Monthly Report of TRIM Activities, Report No. 11," 27-28 Dec 1955, F MAAGV Monthly activity report # 37 Dec 1955, MAAG-V, Box 2, E A1 9, RG 472, NARA.

continued efforts to modernize the South Vietnamese forces and made a limited attempt to retrain the South Vietnamese forces to fight guerrillas and conduct counterinsurgency. Throughout the period, the advisors faced and were sometimes the cause of several problems. American advisors, especially at the top, remained steadfastly optimistic about their progress in Vietnam. They believed that training exercises, leadership courses, and better equipment would fix the shortcomings of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF), but South Vietnam's deep social, economic, and political problems undercut or outright prevented any military improvement. Further, the advisors developed the RVNAF along American lines, which for a variety of reasons rarely suited them.

Following the 1954 Viet Minh victory at Dien Bien Phu, the Geneva Accords temporarily split Vietnam in two. Ho Chi Minh and the communists controlled Hanoi and the north, with the French and US-backed Vietnamese government in Saigon in the south. Elections scheduled later would determine the country's ultimate future. The Eisenhower administration believed this was a major defeat and despite resistance from some key policy makers, including the secretary of defense and several members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and the president to continued US support of the Republic of Vietnam. Washington chose Vietnam, into which it had already sunk so many dollars, as its Southeast Asian bulwark against communism.[69]

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[69] George C. Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002), 57-58.

American policymakers believed that above all else, the Republic of Vietnam needed a strong leader. Secretary Dulles and others believed they had found their strong leader in Ngo Dinh Diem, an educated southern elite with strong anti-communist credentials and some administrative experience.[70] Personally brave and dedicated but distant and aloof, Diem was "intellectually unsuited" to leading South Vietnam in the face of communist insurgency. His Catholicism made him more attractive to American policymakers, but preferential treatment for his coreligionists weakened the South Vietnamese state and helped compromise his leadership. The French and several influential Americans including General J. Lawton Collins, argued that Diem was a terrible choice to lead South Vietnam, but the Eisenhower administration nevertheless backed him with major military and economic assistance.[71]

In late 1954, Saigon was in chaos and President Diem's tenure appeared short lived. General Collins, sent on a special mission to assess the situation, believed Diem had little chance of success. He was unimpressed by Diem and did not believe him capable of organizing a government out of the Vietnamese ether. He worried about the various armed sects in the south, which threatened to overthrow the nascent South Vietnamese government. These criminal gangs and religious cults controlled significant forces of paramilitary fighters, potentially a match for Diem's undertrained Vietnamese National Army.[72] However, Diem and army units loyal to him crushed the Binh Xuyen,

[70] Herring, *America's Longest War*, 58-59.

[71] Jacobs, *Cold War Mandarin*, 33, 56, 60.

[72] Herring, *America's Longest War,* 233.

a mafia organization in Saigon, in early 1955. His troops then swept the nearby Mekong Delta areas of dissidents. Together, these victories appeared to discredit Collins' gloomy assessments.[73]

After defeating the sects, Diem consolidated his power in the south and with US help delayed and then fixed the elections called for by the Geneva Accords. Washington began what one historian has called a crusade of assistance to South Vietnam, pouring military and economic aid in to the country. In the US, the influential pro-Vietnam lobby American Friends of Vietnam drummed up congressional support for the effort. From 1955 to 1961, the US spent over $1 billion on Diem's government, shoring up the consumer industry, fighting inflation, and above all supporting the armed forces. The US spent four times as much money on the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) than it did on economic, agrarian, and social assistance.[74]

On the surface, the aid appeared to work. Diem's secret police crushed Communist networks across the Country, inflation stayed down, and Saigon's economy boomed. However, the superficial boon masked serious problems. South Vietnam never recovered from the devastation of Japanese occupation and the French war. Rice production could not reach pre-WWII levels and rubber exports were slow to expand.

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[73] Jacobs, *Cold War Mandarin,* 79.

[74] Herring, *America's Longest War,* 66-74. Historians disagree on exactly how much aid went to South Vietnam. Herring estimates $85 million a year during the Diem period (*America' Longest War,* 70-71). James S. Olson and Randy Roberts claim that the US spent $1.65 billion from 1956-1961 (*Where the Domino Fell: America and Vietnam, 1945-2006* [New York: Brandywine Press, 2006], 66). David L. Anderson estimated $250 million in aid annually, with 78% going to the military (David L. Anderson, *Trapped by Success: The Eisenhower Administration and Vietnam, 1953-1961* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1991], 133 and 162).

Along with military aid, South Vietnam came to depend on US economic aid during the late 1950s and early 1960s. US economic aid purchased consumer goods, but was not spent effectively on infrastructure, as had been the case in Europe during the Marshall Plan.[75]

Furthermore, Diem's government was corrupt, unrepresentative, and inefficient. The Diem still had to bargain with the sects his troops defeated in 1955. Large ethnic minorities held shared resentment with the Vietnamese. Diem's pro-Catholic policies worsened the divide between them and Buddhists. All this left South Vietnam with little in the way of an identity.[76] Diem and his subordinates refused to institute land reform in the rural areas, which could have dramatically improved the lives of rural peasants. They even replaced centuries-old village councils with provincial governors.[77]

Whatever the problems in the strategic situation or the shortcomings of the RVN government, MAAG-Vietnam stuck to its mission of developing RVNAF. They worked toward this goal with the usual methods of American advising: development of schools, creation of training cadres, inspection and review of Vietnamese units, and close work between advisors and their Vietnamese counterparts. MAAG advisors hoped that Vietnamese officers would accept American military standards and practices, and absorb US military habits and ethics.

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[75] Anderson, *Trapped by Success*, 154-156.

[76] Olson and Roberts, *Where the Domino Fell*, 50-55.

[77] Larry H. Addington, *America's War in Vietnam: A Short Narrative History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 52.

MAAG-VIETNAM

Though MAAG Vietnam trained the RVNAF generally, its focused on the development of an effective Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN).[78] Armies, which can control territory, the population, and resources, have political power in a way that air forces and navies traditionally do not. Developing an effective army could help shore up the weak RVN state. Further, the Americans believed that the RVN needed a conventional force, capable of standing up to an invasion from the north. Thus, MAAG-Vietnam built up the ARVN as one of the many "little American armies" developed around the world in the 1950s. They would help guide the newly independent ARVN—hitherto only a source of light infantry for the French—into the modern American way of war. It can be noted that this flew in the face of General James A. Van Fleet's suggestions during his 1954 inspection of MAAG units in Asia, as seen in Chapter IV.

US advising of the Vietnamese began after the defeat of France at Dien Bien Phu, and was initially conducted alongside French advisors. The Franco-American Training Relations and Instructions Mission (TRIM) lasted from early 1955 through 1956 and accomplished little. US and French trainers and generals clashed on nearly every subject, from the organization of the Vietnamese National Army (VNA—the predecessor to the ARVN), to its tactical training, deployment, and equipment. Vietnamese resentment of the French, and French attitudes toward the Vietnamese,

[78] Office of Chief MAAG, Saigon, "Correspondence relating to the personnel situation in MAAG, Vietnam in 1955," 24 Jan 1955, USAHEC.

prevented effective cooperation between them. The language barrier between Americans and Vietnamese greatly slowed training efforts, as did the diversion of many American personnel to the evacuation of Vietnamese refugees from the north.[79] Further driving a wedge between the parties was Diem's war with the sects, such as the Cao Dai and the Binh Xuyen, who Diem needed to dismantle before he could consolidate his power. In summer 1955, those French forces remaining in Vietnam began to withdraw, and TRIM saw almost half its personnel depart. This first training effort failed.[80]

Before the French had even withdrawn, however, some American advisors declared the advisory mission in Vietnam a success. They estimated that, by 1 July 1956, the Vietnamese forces would be capable of resisting an external attack long enough to withdraw to better terrain south of the 17th Parallel (the division between North and South Vietnam). They were also confident that small, 10-man Self Defense units would be sufficient to protect Southern villages from guerrilla attack. Though the insurgent threat was minimal in 1956, MAAG advisors remained mostly uninterested in the South's local defense forces.[81]

As early as the TRIM effort, the US pushed for the creation of a conventional force—the obvious inclination of a military power more comfortable with large scale battle rather than the thorny issues of guerrilla war. For this mission, the US and South

[79] Gregory M. Schrein, "Advisors Divided: The French, Americans, and the Training Relations and Instruction Mission in South Vietnam, 1955-1956" (Student Paper, CGSC, 2011).

[80] Spector, *Advice and Support*, 251-252.

[81] "Country Statement for Laos and Vietnam, 31 December 1955," 15 Jan 1956, F MAAGV 370.2 Country Statement on MDAP, Non-NATO Countries, 15 Jan 1956, MAAG-V, Box 7, E HM1996, RG 472, NARA.

Vietnamese compromised on a force of 150,000 troops, organized into ten divisions (six "light" and four "field" divisions), supported by territorial regiments. The field divisions were similar to US infantry divisions, though more lightly armed. The light divisions were pure "leg" infantry, intended to fight against guerrillas. Compromises between the two sides meant that though the divisions were organized along American lines, with the idea of using them to face a cross-border assault as had happened five years earlier in Korea. As a concession to the RVN, which wanted their armed forces to establish control in the countryside against the underground communist party and various criminal organizations, the divisions were based regionally, operating within a certain part of Vietnam.[82]

This had major implications. The divisions, tied down logistically to their base areas, could not move easily to other parts of Vietnam, which called into question the entire American concept of creating division-sized units for conventional combat. Second, they helped to create regions of military control, where Vietnamese officers and generals became closely tied to the politics of their particular division area.[83] That these characteristics could have been a benefit during a counterinsurgency did not occur to the Americans, who believed the real threat came from the north.

Lieutenant General Samuel T. Williams took command of the MAAG in 1955 and led the unit through 1960. His resume was impressive. A career infantry officer, with ample combat and leadership experience in both world wars and Korea, Williams

[82] Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam*, 20-24, and Spector, *Advise and Support*, 263-264.

[83] Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam*, 24.

believed that the main threat to the Republic of Vietnam was a conventional invasion from the north, as had happened in Korea. The communists could also support their attack with infiltrators sent down the Ho Chi Minh trail.[84] He focused on creating division-sized units. Under his command, MAAG taught the ARVN how to fight like Americans, with motorized and mechanized infantry, armor, artillery, and truck-borne logistics. Williams and the advisory group ignored various paramilitary and local security units and concentrated on the ARVN.[85] He reorganized Vietnamese forces in 1956, urging that the Vietnamese strengthen the "light divisions" with heavy weapons and support, and disband the territorial regiments so they could reinforce the divisions. Shuffling of troops, weapons, and units continued well into 1960, by which time the ARVN had reorganized into seven infantry divisions, more similar to American units. Though Williams argued to the contrary, the new divisions were roadbound, much like the defeated French before them.[86]

Throughout 1956 and 1957, the advisors made "Training Visit Reports," in which senior MAAG officers—usually the Deputy Chief and a small staff—visited ARVN units and assessed their strengths and weaknesses. They examined organization, morale, the appearance of the troops, their living conditions, lines of communication, missions, and general combat readiness. Some units were in dire shape, but overall the Americans believed the units improved.

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[84] "Briefing charts prepared for Lt. General S.T. Williams to accompany MAAG Vietnam briefing," 31 May, 1957, USAHEC.

[85] Anderson, *Trapped by Success*, 135 and 137.

[86] Spector, *Advise and Support*, 295-296 and 299.

The Americans saw logistics as one of the main problems for the nascent Vietnamese army. General Williams blamed the French for failing to train their Vietnamese forces how to manage their logistical trains and maintain their weaponry. To make matters worse, the equipment left to the Vietnamese by the French had been used hard and put up wet by the French forces.[87] In almost every Training Visit Report, the Americans found logistics and maintenance sorely lacking in Vietnamese units. The 703rd Ordnance Ammunition Company exemplified the ARVN's shortcomings in this area, with dismal, flooded ammunition storage facilities. Entire rows of ammunition were unserviceable. Rounds of live howitzer ammunition were placed decoratively around the facility. In the 3rd Field Division, only 25% of their 700 vehicles were usable, the remainder out service from mechanical failure.[88]

Vietnamese units also had generally unmilitary behavior. In June 1957, a MAAG visit to the 1st Armored Battalion found that the unit maintained its vehicles well, but neglected its training and had lax discipline. Their barracks and motor pool area were messy and disorganized. They kept their equipment stowed away in buildings, rather than on their vehicles so that they could move out into the field at a moment's notice.[89] Some Vietnamese units appeared broken beyond repair, such as the 130th Territorial Regiment. The regiment had no interest in training or maintaining its

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[87] "Briefing charts prepared for Lt. General S.T. Williams."

[88] "MAAGV Training Visit Report #1, 16-30 Apr 1956," 30 Apr 1956, MAAG-V, Box 1, E A1 16, RG 472, NARA.

[89] "MAAGV Training Visit Report #15, 1-30 June 1957," 30 Jun 1957, MAAG-V, Box 1, E A1 16, RG 472, NARA.

equipment. The unit's officers did not bother to try and improve their base area'sterrible drainage, leaving the troops to live in a swamp. The unit never concentrated to train as a regiment, leaving the Americans to comment on further training of the unit as "futile."[90] Reports like these confirmed Williams' belief that the territorial regiments drained manpower from ARVN divisions.

These reports described a year in the life of one of the ARVN's major units, the 4th Field Division, and show the kind of problems encountered while trying to develop the Vietnamese force. In July 1956, the visiting advisory team found the 4th Field Division short many of its vehicles and best infantry weapons, like mortars and recoilless rifles. The division also had a high desertion rate, mainly because of the low pay for the enlisted, who could not support their families. Desertion and shortages of personnel left the unit with 7,968 men instead of its authorized 8,500. They lacked good housing and other facilities. Several of the division's infantry elements were deployed elsewhere in combat operations.[91]

When visited again a year later, in June 1957, the division's strength had fallen even further—they were now short 1,018 men, including 99 officers, many of them from transfers and an influenza epidemic. They were still short half of their vehicles. They had finally started housing construction for the troops, but elements of the division's regiments remained on operations against insurgents, despite requests by the American

[90] "MAAG V Training Visit Report #21 1-31 December 1957," 31 Dec 1957, MAAG-V, Box 1, E A1 16, RG 472, NARA.

[91] "MAAGV Training Visit Report #4, 1-31 July 1956," 31 Jul 1956, MAAG-V, Box 1, E A1 16, RG 472, NARA.

advisors that the division be concentrated for training. The visiting team observed an attack exercise which showed numerous tactical mistakes. Though the division's chronic shortage of manpower had gone unaddressed by the ARVN command structure, Major General Earl Bergquist, Deputy Chief of the MAAG's training branch, acknowledged some problems were outside of the division's control (their maneuver elements conducting operations and the outbreak of disease) and considered the division's commander, Lieutenant Colonel Ngo Dzu, a sharp, capable officer. He also observed amicable relations between the division personnel and their American advisors.[92]

Another visit four months later, in October, found the 4th Field Division numerically even weaker, now short 1,500 troops. However, the desertion rate had improved since 1956, and discipline, morale, and troop appearance were all good. The division was "seriously short" of field radios and still at only half strength in vehicles, but cared for its equipment. Most importantly, from the American perspective, the entire division was now concentrated at Bien Hoa and could finally begin training together. Major General Bergquist noted that the division's 10th Regiment, trained in "accordance with American tactics and utilizing American Field Manuals," and that another unit conducted a battalion attack with aggressive advances and "orthodox" squad rushes. He

[92] "MAAGV Training Visit Report #15."

described their training center is "one of the best in the country."[93] Bergquist emphasized the importance of following American tactical practices.

By the end of 1956, MAAG-Vietnam was confident that the ARVN could maintain internal security and offer a few weeks of resistance against Northern attack. The advisors were worried about the lack of a corps-level command structure and the ARVN's continued operations against dissident sects, but believed that training could correct these shortcomings by the end of 1958.[94] MAAG also worked to improve the ARVN's officer shortage, a hold-over from the army's heritage as a source of enlisted for the French forces. Vietnamese officers attended schools in the United States, including the Command and General Staff College and various branch schools. They believed that ARVN officer quality had improved generally, through duty experience and "advice and guidance" from their advisors.[95]

MAAG reported, by the end of the 1950s, that the Vietnamese forces were improving. ARVN units finally began completing their basic training cycles. The Americans and Vietnamese developed a school system, inspired by the US Army's, which included a center for technical and service training; an infantry school; centers for a medicine, intelligence, and psychological warfare; a military academy for officers; a military school for staff work; and a replacement center. The ARVN established

[93] "MAAGV Training Visit Report #9 1-31 October 1957," 31 Oct 1957, MAAG-V, Box 1, E A1 16, RG 472, NARA.

[94] "Country Statement for Vietnam, 31 December 1956," 21 Jan 1957, F MAAGV 400 Country Statement foor Vietnam, MAAG-V, Box 7, E HM1996, RG 472, NARA.

[95] "Quarterly Activities Report of MAAG-Vietnam, 1 Mar to 31 May 1958," 10 Jun 1958, F MAAGV 370.2, Box 17, E HM 1996, RG 472, NARA.

eighteen schools under US direction by 1958, and thousands more ARVN officers travelled to the continental US for training at American schools.[96] Some of these officers even attended classes to study atomic weapons and operations on a nuclear battlefield.[97]

These improvements concealed a number of problems. First was the paradoxical organization of the Vietnamese divisions. They were quite light in comparison to American units of WWII, on which they were modeled.[98] Experience in Korea had shown that the lighter ROKA divisions had fared poorly against the Chinese and that the superior performance of the American divisions had been at least partly due to their much heavier firepower. How well these light divisions would have performed against a conventional North Vietnamese attack in 1960 can never be known, but the limits of American material support, and the inability of Vietnamese infrastructure to support heavier divisions, suggest that MAAG Vietnam had failed to even equip a viable conventional army, let alone train it to fight.

President Diem created some of the RVNAF's problems. He insisted that the army remain mostly regional rather than mobile, so that army units and officers could be used to control those areas politically, and was reluctant to deploy any units into the

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[96] James L. Collins, *The Development and Training of the Vietnamese Army: 1950-1972* (Washington, DC: Center for Military History, US Army, 1975), 12-16.

[97] "Quarterly Activities Report of MAAG-Vietnam, 1 Dec 1956 to 28 Feb 1957," 10 Mar 1957, F MAAGV 370.2, MAAG-V, Box 12, E HM 1996, RG 472, NARA.

[98] Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam*, 24.

countryside or away from their training areas.[99] He relied on the military to stay in power, but Diem roughly handled his officers, promoting and demoting based on loyalty rather their military skill. He frequently changed the army's command structure to suit his political needs.[100] His religion also affected his military decision making. He promoted General Ton That Dinh when the general converted to Catholicism. Few of Diem's favorites had strong nationalist credentials, having been administrators for the French or trained by the metropolitan forces; one of his favorites spoke better French than Vietnamese. Despite his obvious shortcomings, Diem enjoyed the support and respect of General Williams, Secretary Dulles, and other significant American leaders.[101]

The problems with the RVNAF's senior leadership trickled down to the colonels, majors, and captains in the forms of corruption and apathy. Some sold military hardware on the black market and trafficked drugs and prostitutes. Many did not take training seriously. MAAG advisors found instruction courses run without any sense of urgency or professionalism and taught by incompetent political appointees.[102]

The corruption of Diem's government and armed forces had profound effects on the common South Vietnamese enlisted man. Government officials and commanding officers embezzled soldiers' salaries or forced them to pay for their food and uniforms. Constant delays slowed housing construction, especially for dependents—the 4th Field

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[99] Olson and Roberts, *Where the Domino Fell*, 93.

[100] Prados, *Vietnam*, 75-76.

[101] Jacobs, *Cold War Mandarin*, 169 and Spector, *Advise and Support*, 280.

[102] Spector, *Advise and Support*, 281 and 285-286.

Division's housing travails described earlier were an example of this. The RVNAF issued American military rations instead of paying for fresh Vietnamese food. Conscription tore sons away from their families and left them unable to financially support their loved ones. During the 1950s, the government and armed forces totally failed to instill national spirit and esprit d'corps in the troops. All of these factors sapped Vietnamese morale and ruined ARVN units.[103] It should have come to no surprise to the Americans, then, when ARVN units performed badly in combat. But the advisors were essentially blind to the damage wrought on Vietnamese society by heavy handed conscription policies.

MAAG reports remained positive through the 1950s. More junior advisors in Vietnam spent most of their time in the field, with their units, attempting to convince their Vietnamese counterparts to adopt certain practices or procedures. General Williams and the senior advisors mostly remained with higher headquarters and in Saigon. At quarterly Senior Advisers' conferences, Williams heard briefings by corps and division advisors. Junior advisors who sat in on these conferences, lieutenant colonels who spent their time in the field and not in Saigon, sometimes expressed dismay at the optimism of the reports.[104] Williams maintained that all was well in Vietnam, especially when it came to US-Vietnamese relations: "Vietnamese reaction to the American advisors was and is excellent."[105]

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[103] Robert K. Brigham, *ARVN: Life and Death in the South Vietnamese Army* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2006).

[104] Spector, *Advise and Support,* 292-295.

[105] "Briefing charts prepared for Lt. General S. T. Williams."

While Diem's government absorbed millions in US aid and MAAG trained for a conventional war, serious problems developed in the countryside. In one of South Vietnam's few successes, Diem had nearly eradicated the underground communist network left after the war with France, leaving the National Liberation Front (NLF) in shambles. However, North Vietnam began more serious support of the south in 1957. Revolution restarted as mix of local revolutionaries and transplanted northerners. Diem's oppressive government, which had ignored the peasant's plight, helped produced volunteers for the movement. Violent action by insurgents increased from 700 assassinations of government officials a year in 1958 (hardly a small number) to 2,500 killed in 1960. In 1959, the insurgents began significant military operations.[106] The ARVN, into which the US had poured so much money and effort, performed poorly in combat against the derisively nick-named Viet Cong. For example, one NLF battalion repeatedly ambushed ARVN units in late 1959 and early 1960, inflicting scores of casualties and capturing numerous weapons. In one instance, they even penetrated the perimeter of an ARVN post.[107] By 1960, it was clear that the south faced more threats than just an invasion by the north.

[106] Herring, *America's Longest War*, 80-82.

[107] Eric M. Bergerud, *The Dynamics of Defeat: The Vietnam War in Hau Nghia Province* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 22.

THE PARTIAL SHIFT TO COUNTERINSURGENCY

By 1960, the strength of the communist insurgency forced the Americans and Vietnamese to reassess the ARVN. Lieutenant General Lionel McGarr took command of MAAG-Vietnam in 1960 and tried to shift the ARVN from a conventional force to one capable of dealing with an insurgency. The Americans instituted anti-guerrilla training, tried to make better use of RVN's various paramilitary- and security forces, rotated the training periods of many ARVN units, and generally reorganized the armed forces.

McGarr, more attuned to the problems of insurgency warfare than many other American generals of the period, gathered his senior advisors for a frank discussion of the new mission they faced.[108] McGarr saw major obstacles to overcoming the Vietnamese insurgency. He believed that the US advisors were largely alone in the task of teaching counter-insurgency, because the political solutions to the guerrilla movement—closing the porous borders with Laos and North Vietnam, and correcting the major internal problems of South Vietnam—were out of MAAG's hands. Even though guerillas had serious disadvantages, such as dependency on the local population and limited weaponry, the ARVN was too weak to take advantage of these shortcomings. McGarr believed that the RVNAF needed full command of the hitherto paramilitary Civil Guard and other, local security forces, and needed clearer internal

[108] Matthew T. Archambault, "Gauging the Fullness of our Full Spectrum Operations," (Student Paper, CGSC, 2009), 22-25. General McGarr served as commandant of the Command and General Staff College before his tenure as Chief of MAAG-Vietnam, and had introduced guerrilla warfare curriculum into the school.

lines of command, to better control the RVNAF's geographically dispersed and highly territorial units. On the battlefield, McGarr hoped that instilling a greater offensive spirit in the Vietnamese, through better individual, leader, and small unit training could finally give the RVNAF the edge it needed to crush the insurgency.[109]

By September of 1961, McGarr reported positive news: the ARVN units were training to fight guerrillas; the air force had new, better aircraft to replace their elderly prop-driven planes; and ARVN artillery had gotten out into the field, away from the bases, where it could effectively support ARVN operations. McGarr saw "heartening indications of improvement in the all important areas of self confidence and offensive spirit." But there was still much work to be done—"It should not be inferred from the above 'laundry list' of achievements that the optimum or even in many case, the desired degree of excellence, has yet been attained." He nevertheless remained confident that the RVNAF could defend Vietnam if given more training.[110]

McGarr even managed improvements to the RVNAF command structure, making "real progress" toward command and control reorganization. Through organization, the ARVN now had command of all the territorial troops, critical for defeating an insurgency.[111] However, the, the problems of regionalized commands—tied logistically and politically to specific areas of Vietnam—continued. As late as

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[109] "Anti-Guerilla Operations - re: Implementing Actions for Anti-Guerrilla Operations," 15 Nov 1960, F 0158, Box 0018, Vietnam Archive.

[110] Lieutenant General Lionel McGarr, "Report of Chief MAAG, Vietnam," 1 Sep 1961, USAHEC.

[111] "Are reforms in Military Command Really Taking Hold," 13 Jul 1961, F 15, Box 01, Douglas Pike Collection: Unit 02 - Military Operations (hereafter Pike Collection), Vietnam Archive.

December 1961, General McGarr continued urging the creation of more mobile reserve units that could be deployed to any part of Vietnam, because the RVNAF airborne and marine units had been overstretched by their constant deployment.[112] ARVN commanders, almost feudal in their territorial assignments, were reluctant to release their units to other leaders.

McGarr also downplayed the South's rampant political problems. At a January 1961 meeting with the senior American advisors, he reminded his troops they were to stay out of any Vietnamese conversations about the state of the RVN government and/or President Diem. McGarr argued that such criticisms of the South were "normally instigated by dissatisfied politicians, misled intellectuals, Communists or certain elements of the foreign community," and that corruption in South Vietnam was actually less than in other, similar countries, because President Diem's leadership had stamped out corruption.[113]

Further, McGarr proved an aloof leader of MAAG-Vietnam. He rarely visited the field or even his staff, remaining in his quarters for days at a time.[114] He seems to have had knowledge of counterinsurgency techniques—understanding the importance of the population, of guerrilla mobility, etc.—but focused on the combat aspect, believing that the military's main goal was to destroy the insurgents in battle. The shift to

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[112] Lieutenant General Lionel McGarr to the Honorable Ngo Diem, 28 Dec 1961, F 0220, Box 0020, Vietnam Archive.

[113] Lionel McGarr, "Remarks by the Chief of the Military Assistance Advisory Group in Vietnam (McGarr), Saigon," Jan 30, 1961, F 12, Box 01, Pike Collection, Vietnam Archive.

[114] Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam*, 57.

counterinsurgency in Vietnam was limited at best. Though some US special forces units were sent to develop special guerrilla units—which was really a separate issue from counterinsurgency—the US Army, and MAAG, believed that an army capable of dealing with a conventional threat was surely capable of dealing with a low-intensity insurgency threat.[115]

The advisors were not universal believers in the conventional threat, however. Advisors' writings after their time in country suggest that at least some of them held nuanced views of the conflict and advising the South Vietnamese. Colonel John L. Erickson wrote about MAAG-Vietnam while a student at the Army War College and urged the advisory group to improve its guerrilla training efforts. He believed they had effectively created a force capable of conventional warfare, but still lagged in counterinsurgency capabilities. He described typical COIN methods the MAAG and ARVN could use: "Military units of sufficient strength to avoid defeat by Communist guerrillas must be located in areas where they can provide protection and security to the local inhabitants. . . . In addition to their security mission, these units must integrate themselves into the local communities and assist in the conduct of schools, the improvement of health and sanitation, and the improvement of local economic and social conditions. . . . They should be used to improve and construct roads, communications, and to survey and map sparsely inhabited areas of the country."[116] Along similar lines, Lieutenant Colonel Charles Thebaud argued that the advisors could directly participate

[115] John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 126.

[116] Erickson, "Impact of the United States."

in counterinsurgency. Because GIs were known for kindness and generosity, he argued, they were natural as counterinsurgents: "spread throughout the hamlets and villages of Southeast Asia as advisers, [they] are a formidable force in being that can, through leadership, tact, persuasion and friendship, do much as part of their advisory duties to counter Communist insurgency."[117]

Lieutenant Colonel Clayton Moore, who had been in MAAG-Vietnam from 1956-1957, did not suggest increased counter-insurgency training, but did identify enemy guerrilla units operating in the jungles and mountains as the primary problem in Southeast Asia. The advisors working there needed "language, counterguerrilla, ranger, and other specialized training courses." He argued that the Military Assistance Institute, described in Chapter II, had greatly improved the quality of advisors. Moore's opinions were likely colored by his time as an advisor and by second-hand information: he had served in Vietnam before the communist insurgency in the south became effective, and would have limited opportunity to directly observe MAI graduates in the field, because that institution had not existed when he had been an advisor. However, his belief that guerrilla forces were the main threat did come much closer to reality than what MAAG Vietnam espoused.[118]

In 1958, Colonel Norman H. Bykerk wrote a critical review of the advisory mission in Vietnam. He worried that MAAG-Vietnam, and groups elsewhere, were used to occupy "incompetent personnel" unwanted elsewhere. Few advisors understood

[117] Thebaud, "MAAG Adviser."

[118] Moore, "MAAG Duty."

Vietnamese history and culture. Americans arrived in Vietnam with preconceived notions about their job because of what they had heard in the military's grapevine and were "almost totally unaware of US interest in the area, the magnitude of the money being spent and the responsibility of a MAAG with respect to both." Some were unaware of their duty as an example for the Vietnamese to follow.

Bykerk also argued that the RVN government needed serious overhaul before it could effectively lead the country. President Diem had great difficulty communicating with the common Vietnamese. His characteristics affected the entire country, because "actual leadership remains largely in his hands and a very small immediate group around him, who he trusts." Diem had to get rid of the government's "medieval and colonial" policies, by enacting "drastic" land reforms and involving minority groups, like the Moi and Cambodians, into government and society.

Unlike many military reports of the era, which barely mention the Vietnamese other than to criticize their failures or praise their success in learning US techniques, Bykerk wrote in detail about the South Vietnamese officers. He did not disparage them as amateurish or overly politicized, noting that many had more recent combat experience than did their American advisors. He believed that Vietnamese officers sized up their American advisors and respected the hard workers and disregarded the lazy or ineffective. This reflected the problems of the "bad advisor" emphasized at the Miltiary Assistance Institute. He also argued that the Americans simply did not understand Vietnamese concerns, who questioned US intentions in Vietnam. They did not want to be "made tools of what they regard as a new form of imperialism which is no more

appealing than the old familiar colonial imperialism, nor less fearsome than what they know of Communistic imperialism." The timing of Bykerk's writing, in 1958, was before the insurgency worsened and the weaknesses of the American-trained ARVN became more obvious.[119]

Though advisors like Erickson, Thebaud, Moore, and Bykerk held different views than did the MAAG at large, the historical record suggests they were a definite minority. Even famously contrary advisors like Colonel John Paul Vann, present for the Ap Bac disaster in 1963, only became strongly critical of the advisory effort later in the early 1960s, after the chance had long to past to either train the South Vietnamese to face an insurgency, convince Diem to change his policies, or leave the ARVN to its own operational devices.

CONCLUSION: THE FAILURE OF ADVISING IN VIETNAM

The inability of the ARVN, even after its supposed counterinsurgency and anti-guerrilla training, to defeat the communist insurgency drove the Americans and South Vietnamese to drastically increase the size of the RVNAF. It also pushed the Americans closer to introducing direct support and combat units into Vietnam, which in turn encouraged the creation of a new American command in Vietnam, the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, MACV, under command of Lieutenant General Paul D.

[119] Bykerk, "MAAG Vietnam."

Harkins. He was a conventional commander with little interest in counterinsurgency.[120] Harkins wanted a military solution to the Vietnam problem. Decades later, he remained convinced that South Vietnam's internal problems were relatively minor and that 1963 had been a good year for the advisory effort, with the situation "pretty well under control."[121] Only in this final phase before direct US intervention did American advisors drop the veil of optimism. Several senior corps and division level advisors, including Lieutenant Colonel John Paul Vann, expressed serious doubts about how the US had trained the ARVN to face the communist insurgency and what, if any, strategy the US planned in the war. MACV and the army largely ignored their dissention.[122]

Support for Diem finally waned in 1963, when a combination of events made evident the president's shaky control of South Vietnam. Senator Mike Mansfield, longtime member of the American Friends of Vietnam and supporter of Diem, visited South Vietnam and left the country with a much-changed assessment of Diem's leadership. The ARVN suffered a humiliating defeat at Ap Bac, despite its years of US training and heavy American weaponry. The Buddhist-Catholic divide came to a head when Thich Quang Duc self-immolated in the middle of a Saigon street. Diem doubled down on his anti-Buddhist policies and placed South Vietnam under martial law. This act was too much for the Americans, and President Kennedy and his policymakers gradually removed support from Diem and tacitly encouraged a coup by several ARVN

[120] Nagl, *Learning to Eat,* 131-132.

[121] "Interview I of Paul D. Harkins by Ted Gittinger," 10 Nov 1981, F 02, Box 05, Rufus Phillips Collection, Vietnam Archive.

[122] Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam,* 81.

generals and their troops. Diem and his brother were murdered by coup conspirators on 2 November, 1963.[123] With Diem gone, American combat units, including special forces detachments, fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft units, and eventually ground troops, entered the fray, and the advisory effort in Vietnam shifted to secondary status, less important to the US that the growing war between American and communist troops in the country.

The Americans trained the ARVN to fight a conventional war, but the ARVN eventually faced an insurgency. It would be unfair to entirely blame the MAAG for this error, however. In 1950, the Republic of Korea Army had been crushed by a conventional assault by the North Koreans, which the Americans had read as a case lesson for getting a mission backwards: they had trained the ROKA to face guerillas, and it had ended up facing tanks. The North Vietnamese were seen as every bit as dangerous as the North Koreans had been, and the Americans were mostly unaware that the North was going through a painful, resource-draining transition into communism, and had decided to focus on diplomatic rather than military means to take control of South Vietnam.[124] What was more damning of the American effort was not that it had gotten the mission wrong, but that through inadequate funding and ineffective training, the MAAG had not even prepared the ARVN to fight a conventional war.

The Americans trained the ARVN to fight like them because it was what the Americans knew how to do. Even though President John F. Kennedy's emphasized

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[123] Jacobs, *Cold War Mandarin,* 136-142, 147, 153-154, and 169-172.

[124] Anderson, *Trapped by Success*, 136-137.

unconventional forces and counter-insurgency, and some advisors clearly believed the South Vietnamese needed more than straight combat training, little beyond conventional training trickled down to the ARVN. Even had the Ericksons and Bykerks of the advisory effort been greater in number, or a general like McGarr less flawed and more dedicated to counterinsurgency, it seems unlikely that Diem's government would have instituted the kind of deep changes needed to derail the communist effort. Also problematic were the disagreements between the US and the RVN on how exactly to train and organize the armed forces. The compromise solution, creating divisional units tied to specific regions, created an army intended to perform conventional and counter-insurgency missions but incapable of both. Frequent reorganizations, often initiated by the Americans, exacerbated these problems. It should also be noted that even in the late 1950s, US planners did not consider Vietnam a strategic priority. For Fiscal Year 1958, the Joint Chiefs of Staff estimated a military assistance budget of just under $50 million for South Vietnam, but estimated more than $215 million for Italy.[125] Before 1965, the US spent more on Taiwan than it did on Vietnam.

It appears, with hindsight, that the American advisory effort in Vietnam was probably doomed from the start. Whatever strengths and abilities MAAG could help develop for the RVNAF were of limited value if South Vietnam, as a nation, could not shake its problems, to say nothing of the North Vietnamese and the southern rebels' say in the matter. But the MAAG advisors in Vietnam in the 1950s and early 1960s do not appear to have shared that sense of historical inevitability. They exuded much of the

[125] Condit, *Joint Chiefs,* vol. 6, 264.

same positive, American attitude seen in other advisory missions, and it left their assessments of the Vietnamese problematic at best, and misleading at worst. Some advisors, as seen in War College student papers and elsewhere, understood the key problems in Vietnam, and viewed ARVN officers as having military strengths, but they appear to have been in the minority, and still believed that the problem was solveable. Lieutenant Colonel Bykerk, for instance, believed that something as small as extending tours from eleven months to twelve could make a real difference.[126] Only near the end of the advisory period did individual advisors voice criticisms.

The advisors worked very hard to develop these forces, but seemed to have lost sight of the proverbial forest. Ronald Spector described how the positive "'Can Do' attitude" of most officers and noncommissioned officers, "who tended to see all faults in the army as correctable, all failures as temporary," contributed to dangerously optimistic reporting on the struggle in South Vietnam.[127] MAAG-Vietnam shared the same optimism as MAAG-Indochina had years before, and this contributed to the disaster of the Vietnam War.

[126] Bykerk, "MAAG Vietnam—Manacled by Geneva."

[127] Spector, *Advice and Support,* 379.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Few absolute statements can be made about the military assistance advisory groups. They conducted many different kinds of missions during the first twenty years of the Cold War, with varying levels of success. In the broadest terms, the advisors were better suited to conventional missions, such as preparing NATO allies for a possible war, than they were toward unconventional assignments, like fighting insurgents in Vietnam. However, there were many exceptions to even this general overview. This conclusion summarizes the successes and failures of the advisory groups. It reemphasizes that the advisors worked within the limitations of the military assistance system, which had limited funds to achieve major objectives, and against the limitations of their own training and organization.

SUCCESSES AND FAILURES

The MAAGs did best when training and equipping conventional forces in Europe and Asia, where the American military model of resource-intense, high-firepower warfare was more easily applied than in counterinsurgency. In Denmark, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, and Greece, the advisors improved the tactical training of the armed forces and pushed them towards adoption of American tactical and

logistical practices. This included realistic combat training, the effective use of artillery, and improved command and control at all levels. The Republic of Korea Army suffered major defeats in the first year of the Korean War, but returned to battle in 1951 a far better force, thanks in large part to the advisory group's rigorous training. In Greece, US training helped the National Army destroy the guerrillas in set-piece battles.

The advisory groups also succeeded in missions focused on logistics and force development. In Spain, the MAAG primarily managed equipment deliveries, improved airfields, and converted the air force to jets. MAAG-Spain, under the capable leadership of Major General August Kissner, capably performed this mission. The Spanish Air Force made effective use of its jets within only a few years of aid's start. In West Germany, the advisors convinced the *Bundeswehr* that routine maintenance and attention to logistics were important attributes for a modern army. Advisors in Japan oversaw major equipment deliveries and helped organize the Self Defense Forces. By the early 1960s, this had established some armed forces for Japan and reduced the need for US troops to remain on the islands.

Several of the advisory groups were very well led. James A. Van Fleet and August W. Kissner behaved as ideal soldier diplomats, performing their operational and diplomatic duties with skill and enthusiasm. Van Fleet also proved open to the human side of advising, emphasizing close interaction with the host nation's population and realistic appraisal of its military abilities. His suggestions that armies in less developed nations be armed and trained to their strengths, as light infantry, rather than be built up

as mechanized forces was probably the best course of action the assistance program could have taken, but went mostly unheeded.

The MAAGs did less well when they operated in underdeveloped countries. Many impoverished nations in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, some suffering from the legacy of colonialism, had limited education for their general population. Teaching partly or fully illiterate enlisted men from these countries how to repair trucks, operate radios, and maintain modern weapons was a daunting task and not accomplishable within only a few years. Furthermore, basic mechanical knowledge was limited in many countries. Whereas the typical US army recruit already knew how to drive a car and conduct simple vehicle maintenance, even the basics had to be taught to a conscript in Turkey, Iran, or Ethiopia. Cultural differences compounded these problems. The advisors believed that many Third World nations had too many holidays and generally looser work habits than did Americans. According to the advisors, the officers in those countries would not delegate authority, failed to act on their own initiative, and squabbled over their bureaucratic fiefdoms.

Language was a major barrier to success. Few advisors could fluently speak the host nation's language. This forced the Americans to rely on interpreters. It also weakened the advisors' classroom lecture and reading assignments. Inability to speak the local language, combined with trainees having varying levels of literacy, resulted in greatly slowed training schedules.

The advisors also struggled with what they saw as overly political officers, especially in Thailand, Vietnam, the Republic of China, and Ethiopia. MAAG personnel

worried their counterparts put their nations in jeopardy when they cared more about political aspirations than soldiering. However, US policy makers valued many of these nations for their anticommunism, often under dictatorial leadership. These dictators used their armed forces—supported by American military assistance—to maintain power. Therefore, officers' political loyalty was vital to the upkeep of the state. It was highly likely for the officers in these armies to become politically involved. From the standpoint of US foreign policy, this could even be seen as desirable.

Many of the problems in the advisory missions were really the fault of military assistance as a whole. As shown in Chapter II, the United States probably never committed the amount of aid necessary to develop allied armed forces as the Americans intended. Creating new armies and air forces needed more than just tanks, jets, and rifles; it required training programs, improvements to infrastructure and education, and the development of officer corps. Five or ten years of military assistance was rarely enough to achieve these long term goals, considering the small size of advisory groups, their short tours of duty, and the training problems incurred by the language barrier. However, the advisors shared the blame in the Republic of Vietnam, where their emphasis on conventional warfare, and disinterest in the country's political problems and its armed forces' specific needs, ultimately met with disaster.

Even if the United States had committed more, better trained officers and enlisted men to the advisory groups, for longer tours, it is uncertain they would have made a difference in some of the more challenging advisory missions. Limited assistance budgets would have restricted the amount of materiel available for allied countries.

More advisors probably would not have solved the problem in South Vietnam, where the Americans made several key mistakes born out of cultural ignorance and their own military training.

The biggest weakness of the advisory effort was the advisors' emphasis on training and equipping allied forces to fight the American way. This placed heavy emphasis on firepower, mobility, and logistics. For such a way of war to work, the military in question needs an educated population to operate the equipment, and a modern infrastructure to move and maintain the equipment. Some countries possessed educated populations and modern infrastructure, and needed only the weaponry; others lacked the roads and harbors to quickly process incoming aid. Still others lacked both educated populations and infrastructure. The sticking point of American assistance was that all three of these all of these countries would receive essentially the same weaponry, equipment, and training. This rarely produced useful results.

The understaffed MAAGs, without special training in advising, worked diligently to modernize, expand, and strengthen armies, navies, and air forces in countries much different than the United States. The officers and enlisted personnel who made up the military assistance advisory groups of the Cold War, for the most part, believed in what they were doing. The financial and political restrictions of the era, the economic and social state of host nations, and the advisors' own concepts of warfare limited the overall success of advisory and assistance missions during the Cold War.

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